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# WIRE

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your monthly exploration of new music

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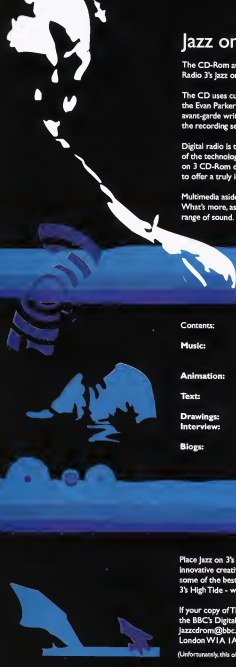
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## Jazz on 3's High Tide

**BBC**

The CD-Rom attached to the cover of this issue of *The Wire* is a multimedia adaptation of BBC Radio 3's jazz on 3 programme, called High Tide.

The CD uses cutting-edge digital radio and animation technology to enhance original music from the Evan Parker Quartet. It features 20 minutes of animation, specially commissioned text by avant-garde writer & poet Paul Haines, biographies, discographies, and original drawings made at the recording session. It is introduced by Jez Nelson, jazz on 3's regular presenter.

Digital radio is the biggest single advance in radio technology since the launch of FM. As pioneers of this technology, the BBC is keen to explore the multimedia potential of the medium. This jazz on 3 CD-Rom demonstrates how text and pictures can be broadcast alongside the audio signal, to offer a truly interactive radio broadcast.

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### Contents:

- Music:** High Tide - a 20 minute continuous improvisation recorded in session by Evan Parker (tenor sax), Marilyn Crispell (piano), Barry Guy (bass) and Paul Lytton (percussion).
- Animation:** Accompanies the music in real time and is derived from digital footage shot at the session.
- Text:** Commissioned from long-time Evan Parker collaborator, Paul Haines, and written in direct response to the music.
- Drawings:** Of the musicians - made at the session by artist Ski Williams.
- Interview:** An in-depth text interview with Evan Parker about High Tide and the creative processes involved in free improvisation.
- Biogs:** Extensive biographies and discographies for each musician involved.

Place jazz on 3's High Tide into the CD drive of your PC or Mac; enjoy the unique and highly innovative creative collaboration between jazz musicians, artists and writers, in conjunction with some of the best radio and multimedia producers and designers working in the UK today; jazz on 3's High Tide - what radio has been waiting for.

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(Unfortunately, this offer is not open to overseas readers).

# WIRE

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# editor's idea

Everyone's curating something at the moment, whether it be the assemblage of postcards on your bedroom wall or the customised CD selection you download from the Internet. The word 'curator' implies more than a choosing and rejecting process. There's also a 'tending' and 'restorative' aspect to the word, and the best retrospectives are precisely those which nurse an ailing or forgotten zone of artistic activity back to health.

Sonic Boom, the six week exhibition now running at London's Hayward Gallery, does just that, as well as being a momentous personal achievement for its curator, David Toop, whose already matted-out schedule has been put under even more strain putting the whole thing together since his article reviewing the past and present of sonic artwork in last year's Undercurrents series (The Wire 1166). Like most technical productions, these things are always infinitely more complicated than they look. One unforeseen problem in building Sonic Boom, for example, was the difficulty of dealing with the crossoak of nose between exhibits — the bleeding sounds from individual installations had to be factored into their distribution around the space. We hope David will have time to write a little more for us when it's all over, though no doubt in the aftermath he'll be caught in a crosstalk of all the trusted egos who feel they've been left out of a necessarily reductive selection process.

It's already an overworked saw, but the fertility of sound art at the moment — a disappointingly bland term, admittedly, for such an unbounded, expanding field of activities and producers — must partly derive from a general ennui with gallery space and recording/performance rituals/venues (only last month, our On Location live reviews section seemed to be more than usually full of questions about the nature of music and performance itself). Brian Eno, one of the voices you'll hear in our section of the magazine given over to sound artists beginning on page 19, has long bemoaned the uniform packaging available to recording artists — he's bored witless by the paltry square centimetres of CD spines which all recordings

reduce down to once they're racked on the shelf. But there is a sense that music is reaching beyond its recorded confines again. Where tape has been treated as a passive receiver of information by performance based musics such as classical, jazz, folk and field artists, electronically enhanced compositions are often bound up with the recording medium itself (which is where a meta-musical like Christian Marclay comes in). Sound strains at the edges of the CD format on projects like Paul Schutze's Site documents, Capinhi's series of Architettura CDs, the long string/verse variations of Alvin Lucier, Paul Panhausen and Alan Lamb. The Canadian group Godspeed You! Black Emperor!, whom the ever intrepid David Keenan finally pins down (and watches them squirm) in an extended interview on page 36, virtually camouflage themselves whenever they invade a stage, preferring to deflect the audience's attention away and onto their disturbing magic-lantern film loops and early copies of their first album were packaged like miniature Joseph Cornell boxes, containing a coin crushed on a railroad track and assorted bits and bobs of cardboard and text leaves. Even The Flaming Lips, a relatively high-profile alternative rock group, managed to slip a four CD conceptual piece for four playback machines under Warner Brothers' noses a couple of years back.

All that remains is to report a departure and an arrival. This month we say goodbye to Daniela Gargiulo, who's been occupying the Advertising Manager's chair since November 1998. Her Amazonian space-selling labours over that period exceeded all records (as did her gig-giving capacity), and have certainly been a prime factor in The Wire's current growth spurt. We'll miss her, but wish her luck in her new position at The Cogency. Meanwhile, congratulations and a copy of Raymond Scott's *Soothing Sounds For Baby* go to Subscriptions Manager Ben House, who's just lathered a daughter. Because Lela is spelt like that, and not the way Eric Clapton wrote it, his job is safe.

**ROB YOUNG**

The June issue of *The Wire* will be on sale on

Tuesday 30 May

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# letters

**Write to:** Letters, *The Wire*, 45-46 Poland Street, London W1V 3DF, UK  
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a full name and address. Every letter published wins a FREE CD

## Tipping the Balance

Finally a magazine that recognizes who the talented musicians are! *Coil* is a very underrated, underexposed project. I've been a fan of theirs for over six years and have 40 or more of their releases. I was blown away when I saw John Balance on the latest cover (*The Wire* 194). I've been completely pleased with every issue of *The Wire*. I've read so far from *Mouse On Mars* to *Ponteshead to Autschre*. I don't think the US market will ever catch up with your elite standing!  
**Preston Thomas** Tucson, Arizona, USA

## Lost in translation

Little did I suspect, when following the tourist trail past Berlin's partially collapsed Kongresshalle (officially called 'die schwangere Auster' [the pregnant oyster]) in late May 1980, that Blixa Bargeld and friends had been undermining its very foundations. So thanks to Biba Kopf for an extensive and informative *Primer on Einstürzende Neubauten* (*The Wire* 194).

I personally feel that more space could have been devoted to FM Einheit's radio play collaborations with Andreas Ammer: *Radio Inferno* and *Apocalypse Live* (Ego 402 CD) feature powerful spoken texts and improvisations by Phil Minton, both titles represent a somewhat neglected and insufficiently explored area of his unique vocal talents. Of special interest to German speakers is *Deutsche Krieger* (German *Warriors*: Invisible 098 CD), a skillfully sampled critique — by turns chilling and humorous — of three less than glorious chapters of 20th century German history. The individual titles "Kaiser Wilhelm Overdrive" and "Unlike Menhof Paradise" mix historical recordings, music samples and original material to encapsulate the political and social upheavals of those periods.

A little more consistency when translating group names and album/track titles might have helped the more inquisitive readers of *The Wire*. Otherwise, I have only the one linguistic correction to make: "Sehnsucht" (Jon Kollaps, Hölzer Mensch and 2K4) translates quite simply as "Desire". No matter how far you look, there isn't an "Addict" in sight.

**Kevin White** Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

"Desire" might be the literal translation from the German, but in fact the title "Desire Adikt" is the one used by Blixa Bargeld as announced on stage many times, and to Biba Kopf in 1983. Ed



## Blood revenge

In defence of the meticulous research Ian Penman did in his excellent piece about my work (*The Wire* 190/191). I would like first of all to comfort Justin Smith of Columbia University with the knowledge that there have existed — for at least 21 years — two Scrimps institutions (letters, *The Wire* 193). The first where I worked in 1969, was and is called the Scrimps Research Institute (on 10666 North Torrey Pines Road, if you'd like to visit). The second is the Scrimps Institute of Oceanography, which does indeed focus much of its research, as the title would imply, on that which dwells below the water. As Mr

Penman correctly pointed out, I worked as a research assistant (in the Department of Haematology and Immunology under Dr Ursula Eberhardt) at the former institute. If you ask the former institute about the latter they will tell you they have no affiliation whatsoever.

I did a stint as an assistant in the Neurochemistry Department of the UCSF Medical School a year later, while I was a biochem undergrad, but I must confess that this is when I finally decided that it was time to inject myself rather than the rats. Consider this the time of John's (y), BF Skinner (whom we all studied a little too extensively), Janis's (Drina) Scream therapy, and our teenage revelations about the psychotropic decade that was conducted during the previous decade on Canadian and US mental patients, US prisoners, San Francisco prostitutes, Third World hospital and prison inmates, and of course, some unsuspecting scientists themselves. And there you have it. We were obsessed with all these things.

And it clearly influenced my singing, which began five years later in 1969. And I'm still alive. For which I congratulate myself — as we might all congratulate ourselves, if congratulations were in order. And now 20 years later, for many of the above reasons, our research isn't over.

Lastly, I would like to ask Mr Smith if he really thinks Turkish parents allow their daughters to be inspected for their virginal status because of Turkey's anti-fundamentalist stance.

**Diamonda Galas** via e-mail

## Four Ears good

There is just one thing in Julian Cowley's well written feature about myself and my label *For 4 Ears* (*The Wire* 194) that I would like to make more precise it was Andres Bosshard who created the project *Kongresshalle* in 1990, and the project *Telefona* in 1997. They were Bosshard's ideas, and he organised both events. The musical conceptions were worked out by the trio *Nachtluft* and would not have been possible without all the musicians who were participating: Hans Anker, Conrad and Johannes Bauer, Daniel Mouthon, Oroshea Schurch on the first, Terry Adens, Jin Hi Kim, Ron Kuwila, Jon Lexell, Paul Lovers, Christian Marclay, Bernard Mison on the second, and David Gathier, Phil Wachsmann and Butch Morris on both projects.

**Günter Philier** via e-mail

## The great pretender

I feel I have to reply to the criticism of my performance as Terrie Thaelmer (On Location, *The Wire* 194). I've been standing in for various Techno/electronic soundscaping artists for a few years now (I recently toured as *Art*, *Autschre* and *Marlin Rev*), just get some shades and a crappy keyboard and stick the CD player on random play and I've always taken pride in my ability to emulate the real thing in performance. culminating in me and my mate Colin's extremely well received performance as *Orbital* at Gasparilla a few years back (despite having to shave my hair off and wear those uncomfortable specs, the whole thing was great).

Anyway, I feel a little aggravated that my one performance of the year when I didn't really feel up to it (I'd rehearsed the routine for weeks and spent a day on my make-up despite a heavy head cold) should be the

# CHICAGO works, Baby...

BOBBY CONN — The Whistler  
 SAM PREKOP — The Afternoon  
 JIM O'ROURKE — Never Again  
 TUE 2000 — Absolutism  
 CHICAGO UNDERGROUND DUO — King Cobra  
 SLAMP — 911  
 PULLMAN — Karma  
 BUNDY K. BROWN — Imagining Place  
 MICK TURNER — Sunny Times Day  
 TRICOLOR — Absolutism  
 TORTOISE — Jetty 58  
 FREEMSWATER — All Life Long Remix  
 JOSHUA ABRAMS — End Of June  
 ETERNALS — Bewilderness  
 NRG ENSEMBLE — Hold That Thought  
 BOBBY CONN WU O'ROURKE — California  
 KEN VANDERMARK 5 — Distance  
 ISOTOPE 217 — LUH



CHICAGO 2018...It's Gonna Change



"It may sound pretentious, but Chicago's music is intelligent music. It's an everyday life kind of smart, though. Smart smart. An intelligence where curiosity reigns supreme, where creativity is rooted in self-production." (John Corbett)

"New York reflects the world, as it is. Chicago reflects the world as it should be." (Sam Prekop)

## CHICAGO 2018 It's gonna change

is a successful attempt to present a snapshot of Chicago's ever-changing creative scene. This compilation contains only as yet unreleased and exclusive material collected by the German journalist Wolf Kampmann with the assistance of Jim O'Rourke. The picture is provided by two hours of music ranging from Tortoise to Pullman, from Bobby Conn to Freemswater - anything but a homogeneous style. This compilation is meant to represent a scene - not to thoroughly document it.

CD and LP (25417) ed. 10/4/00

one that David Elliott decides to pick up on. OK, so I got the wrong tracks on the laptop (it was a bit of a racket, wasn't it?), OK, so I forgot all the dance steps, but is that really excuse enough to launch into such abuse? Left you cold, did I? Well, I'm sorry David, but I didn't hear anyone complaining at the after-gig party where I certainly gave as good a bit of Thaelmair gender-bending love action as I got (if Susan's reading this, then I can only apologise and promise to pay for the damages).

Where was the real Terie Thaelmair? Well, let's just say the boy's not as young as he used to be. Still, it's unfair he should get any grief from this. I fully accept it was me who messed up. I guess I should have listened to something he'd done before taking on the job.

Needless to say, Elliott's review has made me think long and hard about my career, and I'm now thinking of announcing my retirement when I play every single member of Goodspeed You Black Emperor! at the Domino Festival in Belgium.

Oh, and I was going on as John Balance at Cornucopia until you went and put him on the cover in the full light of day. Jesus, isn't it music to play in the dark? Why change a habit of a lifetime now?

See you in Belgium  
**Saxon Roach** Somerset

## Lemmy at 'em

I have been a subscriber for a year or two now and have never written in, but hey, I thought it would be fun as Mr Charles Henry James has written a hideous letter, which was printed in *The Wire* 194. I am afraid that I would have to inform him that, sadly, he is being a tad snobbish (bad word). Firstly, he has a double-barrelled name which, quite frankly, would have led to a beating on the housing estate where I grew up in Belfast.

Secondly, he should maybe think about how Lemmy has influenced with his straight-ahead rawk 'n' roll in Motorhead or his hippy freakout shit from his Hawkwind days (check "The Watcher" from *Domino*... later used by Motorhead). Mr James, it's only rock 'n' roll, but I like it, like it, yes I do.

P.S. To the dude who wrote that helicopter sounds over Belfast were known as "The National Anthem" (Letters, 193): he is wrong, and merely confirming a stereotype of our green and pleasant land.

**Keith McCall** via e-mail

## Copycat crimes

Carsten Nicolai's oscillating water exhibit, *Atom*, at the Audible Light exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford may have been "sublime" (Multimedia, *The Wire* 193), but its basic idea is indistinguishable from ECM 323's liquid sound installation *Test Site*, as exhibited at the South London Gallery, the Museum of Installation and other venues. *Test Site* was reviewed in *The Wire* 176 as "hypnotic" and is written up in detail in *Sound Projector* magazine.

Atom's use of speakers inside holes in the gallery floor is virtually identical to an untitled sound installation by

David Clegg, also, funny enough shown at the Museum of Installation, during whose party there was much talk of a MoMA scheme to re-stage this work in Oxford.

Since other (equally good) Museum of Installation exhibitors such as Bruce Gilbert and Hayley Newman were involved in the exhibition in Oxford, MoMA's scheme has obviously been put into practice. However, the artists responsible for the works in question are conspicuous by their absence, while the presence of their ideas is not. Obviously if those ideas had not been good enough to merit inclusion in MoMA's show, that would be a different matter, but to use those ideas without acknowledging the source seems like a fairly dubious practice.

**Rachel Baker** London

## Forgotten folk

A question about your magazine's content policies. I'm assuming you have a content policy, which is a good thing. If I wanted to read about the latest Beatles reissue I know not to look to *The Wire*. I was surprised and very, very happy when you started dealing with ethnographical recordings, so I need to know why do I seldom see mention in your pages of English, Irish, Scottish or Welsh traditional music? By this, I'm not referring to Fairport Convention, Sandy Denny, etc., but to the real old cranky stuff. There's a lot of reissue stuff going on in Britain (I hear whispers, anyway) that doesn't seem to warrant a mention in your pages. Yet it was *The Wire* that I discovered Rounder's Alan Lomax reissues and Harry Smith's *Anthology Of American Folk Music*. So, does your own country's stuff not get a mention because (a) you've decided not to, or (b) you were all traumatised by Morris dancers as children? Just curious.

**Seamus Kirkpatrick** Brisbane, Australia

## Missing Metal

I am writing to you to ask why a section of imaginative and interesting music is being totally and systematically ignored by your magazine. In May 2000, Metal is not, and has not been for the last ten years, the exclusive province of macho adolescents with raging hormones. In the wake of John Zorn and Mr Bungle, Metal has gradually achieved a degree of experimentation other genres can hardly lay claim to. In recent years, the Scandinavian scene has produced such bands as Arcturus, Dodheimsgard, Ulver and Satyricon, who are experimenting successfully with all sorts of genres, mixing Ambient, drum 'n' bass, Isolationist, Industrial, etc., into their Metal mix and are being wholly ignored by magazines like yours, who deem Metal to be for teenagers only. The American scene has produced bands like System Of A Down, Faith No More and Fear Factory, who have created cutting-edge music which is serious, mature, and which demands to be appreciated outside an exclusively Metal audience.

I notice that last month you featured goatherds Cool and Neubauten. Why not give their spiritual heirs —

Godflesh, Pig, Limbic Art and Fantomas — coverage in your magazine? In my opinion, much of today's Metal is serious enough to have quite a few of your readers stroking away at those chins in terms of musicianship, technical ability and magnation. Alongside Aphex Twin, Tool and Neurosis are just as much descendants of Throbbing Gristle and The Swans whom you so dearly cling to.

I believe that publications like *The Wire* need to remove their aural blinkers and admit that what separates them from Metal is prejudice. Otherwise, enthralling about Black Sabbath or John Balance whilst refusing to admit to the existence of Tool or Arcturus is little more than musical ignorance.

**Daniel Lukes** London

## What next?

I had the fortune of living in London for half a year in the late 70s and listened to live performances by Wire, ATV, The Pop Group, This Heat, Pere Ubu, Buzzcocks, The Fall, etc., which had a lasting impact. Regarding the issues of *The Wire* I have read, these bands have the same importance to you. Maybe most of your writers are also in their mid-forties and grew up with early Pink Floyd, Soft Machine, King Crimson, East Of Eden and the like? Krautrock was not so popular in Germany as in France or England. Listening to Cluster 71, for example, gives me the feeling that it could have been released on Miles Plateau today. Where is the progression: only in computer software?

So, for all you Wire contributors in your mid-forties, don't you have the feeling that the expiry date of most of the digital output these days is faster than ever, in other words there is more crap and redundancy released than ever before and the output of recordings which equally stimulate the intellect and touch the heart has remained small, but stable? My favourite listening which fulfils the above mentioned criteria (Sun Ra, Takemitsu, Feldman, Harry Partch, Chicago Underground Duo/Trio, Carl Stone, to mention only a few), has all been well covered by *The Wire* except for one artist (maybe I missed the issue) whom I warmly recommend: Algerian oud player Alla from Bechar (a mining city in the south of Algeria). So far three CDs have been released on the French AI Sun label, and anyone who cares about Nubian oud player Hamza El Din or guitar players like John Fahey and Loren Mazzacane Connors should check this out. This is the kind of music which, after your CD player has gone silent, you ask yourself: What can come after this? It's certainly neither traditional Arab-Andalusian music nor Grieg-stuff that he plays, but distinctly his own, touching view of music and life. I'm writing this moved by his music, so excuse my bad English.

**Ernst Loch** Berlin, Germany

## Correction

Issue 194: Francisco Lopez's untitled #89 CD reviewed in the Outer Limits. In Brief featured incorrect label information. The CD is released on OR.





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# global ear

## Algiers

If you ask the English Foreign Office about Algeria, they advise you not to go. If you do go, the best advice would be stay in your hotel and never go out. While checking in at Heathrow, I met an expat oil worker. He was surprised to hear that I was going, telling me that he had been working in Algeria for the past seven years and never really ventured into Algiers. Whenever he makes the perilous overland journey to the oil field, it's always in a private jet and escorted by armed guards.

I was travelling with two British groups, *Praying For The Rain* and *The Chili Rockers*. We had been invited to take part in the city of Algiers's millennium celebrations, called *Millénaire Mazar Meni Mezghenia*. The festival lacked off



a year of events planned to showcase artists from all disciplines, both local and foreign. I was told that the *rai* stars Cheb Mami and Cheb Khaled were both expected to perform, but in the event they never showed up. However, this trip would be the first time that a group of musicians from Britain would perform in Algeria since civil war broke out in the early 90s.

The whole affair was intended to show both the Algerians and the rest of the world that the political situation there was changing. In 1991 the country was thrown into political turmoil due to the fundamentalist

A survey of sounds from around the planet. This month . . .

Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) winning the first round of the general election. The secular and military elite halted the electoral process and suspended parliament. Since then, a civil war between the fundamentalists and military-backed governments has been raging, resulting in the deaths of more than 100,000 people. On 15 April 1999, Algeria held democratic presidential elections that were won by Abdelkader Bouteflika, a former foreign minister who enjoys the support of the army. Even though the elections were held amid allegations of fraud, Bouteflika has been trying to ease the tension by issuing a partial amnesty.

It was obvious from the start that we would be heavily 'looked after'. The hotel where most of the artists were staying was a seaside resort about 20km from Algiers. Our police escort entered the compound by passing through an army checkpoint. In the hotel lobby, Jordanians were mixing with Ukrainians, who were taking photographs of the Touaregs, or 'Blue Men of the Desert'. It was here that we could hear the amazing *Diamonds Gales*-like ululating and wailing of a group of women from the Western Sahara. Living in a disputed territory, a 'no-man's land', they have no nationality, which puts them in a worse situation than the Algerians themselves.

Our first gig was at the Atlas Cinema in downtown Algiers. The publicity was virtually non-existent, but a smailish crowd (mainly men) turned out to see us. The *Chili Rockers* put on their all-girl salsa revue and managed to whip up some dancing. I played a short solo set of throat singing, which the local journalists translated as 'sound imitation' in the absence of any other frame of reference. *Praying For The Rain* played their earthy blend of 'spiritual eco-roots' music to the live projection/VJing of DiVa Pictures, a video company run by Steve Teers, and Dennis Dracup's handpainted slides. The audience seemed to love it and yelled for more.

The next day, we shared a bill with a Syrian traditional music ensemble. The new (and-blow-flute) players were very interested in hearing me play my *ney*, and responded by playing 'The Birdy Song' on theirs. I was very relieved when they showed me one of their scales. Algerian TV was there to film the concert, and by now the news was out. 'What's your music about?' a journalist asked multi-instrumentalist Vince DeCocco, one of the founding members of *Praying*

For The Rain. Vince replied in his best French that it was about the continuous evolution of the group's spiritual, ecological and musical beliefs.

On our way to the final venue, the *Ilan Zeydoun* Theatre, we passed through army roadblocks and other remnants of the curfew (which has now been lifted). Luckily the sound engineer had been working with *Ilan* Mladen while living in London and quickly understood what we needed. The audience danced and swayed, clapped and chanted along with *Praying For The Rain*'s astral songs. My forays into the audience playing Tibetan singing bowls were later described as 'psychedelic and homeopathic, not to be missed' by the Algerian newspaper *El Watan*.

Unfortunately, for most of our stay we were shepherded around so closely that we weren't able to hear any other groups play — it was only in our hotel complex that we managed to hear any music. The sound of Jordanian bagpipes, Mongolian horse-head fiddle, Iranian drumming and Western Saharan wailing in their separate rooms created an imaginary landscape. DiVa's Kate Daley patrolled the corridors with a mini DV camera, trying to snatch some footage of these unprecedented jamming sessions.

The final concert was held after a firework display in the bay, affording a spectacular view of the port of Algiers from the city's war memorial. We mingled with the crowd quite freely, the police keeping their distance. By this time, *Praying For The Rain* were heroes. The crowd repeatedly shouted the group's name and joined in with some of the choruses. I made the mistake of composing a piece on the saz, a Turkish long-necked lute, in 5/8 time. The audience, in their enthusiasm, clapped on a straight 4/4. Undaunted, I swallowed my pride and improvised along with them.

MICHAEL ORFISTON

Above: *Praying For The Rain* perform on the edge of the Sahara





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**JOHN CALE**  
**TONY CONRAD**  
**ANGUS MACLISE**  
**LA MONTE YOUNG**  
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**INSIDE THE DREAM SYNDICATE**  
**VOLUME I: DAY OF NIAGARA (1965)**

"In the beginning there was the Dream, the primordial, mind-splitting awe generated by the strings and revolutionary test-chord Zeitgeist of 1960's group the Dream Syndicate." —BILLING STONE

From 1962 through 1965 John Cale, Tony Conrad, Angus MacLise, La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela participated in a collaborative ensemble that articulated the Big Bang of "minimalism." Making long duration and precise pitch, they forged an aggressively reexamining "Dream Music"—dropping the activity of composition and obscuring shared ideas of performance and improvisation. However, the many rehearsal and performance recordings from this period were repressed, and remained inaccessibly buried until this moment. With the recent discovery of an additional cache of tapes, now restored and digitally remastered, the world can step inside the Dream Syndicate for the very first time.

"These recordings are part of a library of effort that represented, for Tony and I at least, a labour of love. The power and majesty that was in that music is still on these tapes." —JOHN CALE

"What I had learned first about John Cale was that he had written a piece which pushed a piano down a mine shaft. We hungered for music almost anything beyond control—or even something just beyond music, a violent feeling of soaring vertigo, powered by immense angular machinery across abrupt and terminal seas of pounding blood." —TONY CONRAD

**TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS**



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# bites



## Iain Ballamy

### Funny farmer

I have always craved melody and rich harmony in music," declares Iain Ballamy, "and until now I've not found the right people to play very free and improvised music with — it's always felt a bit introverted or indulgent. Actually, it can be almost terrifying, but with the right musicians it's exciting and powerful." In the group Food, saxophonist Ballamy has found ideal collaborators from the Norwegian jazz scene to satisfy his craving. Bassest Mats Eilertsen, drummer Thomas Stranden and Arve Henriksen, whose trumpet and vocals are opened out by electronic means in the Oslo quartet Supersilent, have just the kind of flexibility required. They conjure spacious Ambient soundscapes that release the eloquent melodist in Ballamy, but are equally ready to engage in knotty tussles that bring out the musculature and bite in his playing. Ballamy has brought to the quartet his own distinctive compositional and formal sense, developed over a decade and a half playing in diverse contexts with Loose Tubes, Djanog Bates's various projects, Bill Bruford's Earthworks and Billy Jenkins's Voice Of God Collective, as leader of his own groups and through his hungry investigation of global musics. But Food's music is an ensemble affair and his personal approach has been shaped by the "liberating" experience of working with the three Norwegians. "Arve Henriksen inspired me in my first forays into using electronics with my horn," Ballamy says. "I wanted to get into the same sonic space as the rest of the band and start concentrating on using 'sound' to make music with, not just notes and chords with melody lines, tempo changes, the usual basic tools. It seems second nature to them to make music in this uninhibited way. The Norwegian musicians I have met all seem to have their own identity and aspirations musically. Most of it feels timeless, folk and very natural."

A beautifully packaged CD entitled Food was issued last year on Feral, the label which Ballamy has established with artist Dave McKean. It was recorded live at Norway's Høle International Jazz Festival in 1996, and captures the group's seductive interplay of attractive themes and alluring atmospheres. Structures and arrangements for such a set are planned collectively in rehearsal, but the players stay primed for changes dictated by the requirements of the improvisatory moment. "I love that, as it gives the music an edge, and a sense of adventure and danger we all enjoy."

At the end of May, audiences in England will have an opportunity to share in that enjoyment when Food tour the country under the aegis of the Contemporary Music Network. "Bath Festival has commissioned some new pieces for the tour, which are written by me and worked out and conceived by all of us," he reveals. "The rest of the set will be material and ideas we've been working with, but it never happens the same way twice. A significant departure for me is using loops, samples and sounds I've generated myself from the saxophone, or from past recordings of my own." Each concert will begin

with a short duet set featuring Ballamy with multi-instrumentalist Sean Carstensen, who exuberantly hybridised group Farmers Market will further enliven the evening with their unique 'speed Balkan boogie' amalgam. This is another creative encounter that lends support to Ballamy's belief that "if you are open and looking for partners stranger than they can present themselves in unexpected ways". As a duo, Ballamy and Carstensen recorded an album *Repper Street Interludes*, at the very start of this year. It's scheduled to come out in May as the second Feral release. The focus of this collection of short pieces, which include reworkings of standards and (of course) some surprises, talks up the combination of Carstensen's button accordion and Ballamy's tenor. It also has Matt Sharpe on cello, vocals from Norma Winstone and "some divine whistling and selected drums" from Martin Franco.

Another planned Feral release is *Signal To Noise*, a BBC radio dramatisation of a story by Neil Gaiman. Beyond that, Ballamy remains amenable to approaches from artists working in accordance with the spirit of the label. "The spirit could be described as wanting to release music that may not necessarily meet the commercial credentials of most record companies, but which fulfils the need of musicians to present their music in a visually first-class and artistically uncompromising way, and to remain in control of their work in future — which is a dream we all have to pursue." **JULIAN COWLEY** *Repper Street Interludes is out in early June on Feral. Ian Ballamy's Food & Farmers Market are on tour this month. See Out There.*

## Davey Williams

Freedom is surreal

"Dreaming at the moment of REM sleep, when the brain is leaping with creative activity, one is almost a surrealist," asserts guitarist Davey Williams. "Automatic writing, playing music that you don't remember because you were almost an automaton, a transmitter of some sort from the Land Of Ideas. You Haven't Had And Couldn't Think Of By Any Other Means." E-mailing from Birmingham, Alabama, Williams adds that the link between surrealism and the art of free improvisation is barely recognised, even though his present hometown gave birth to two of 20th century America's greatest musical mavericks, Sun Ra and Hank Williams.

Today, the heavy industry that gave Birmingham its Mage City boom years (and an appropriately surreal statue of Vulcan on a hillside overlooking the town) is long gone. However, a large student population has been sustaining a thriving improv scene, with Williams at its centre, since the late 70s. An indelible generator

of links and alliances, he has played with just about every American and European improviser of note, from Derek Bailey to John Zorn. If he is more of a group player than a soloist, the dense, overdubbed electric resonances on his Ecstatic Peace! release *Chained In Sure* are nevertheless well worth investigating. Meanwhile, his ongoing projects include groups with Rue Mon and Jim Saley, the Say What Trio with Steve Noble and the rock-jazz fusion thrash of Curlew with Minneapolis artist George Cartwright. More local connections are mined with the Orlando outfit Numb Right Thumbs on the recently released *Texas Was Delicious*, which throws Williams's mastery of traditional idioms into an improvised, psychedelic jumble of all-American textures. Perhaps his concentration on group projects has secured Williams's relative anonymity, compared to Henry Kaser and Eugene Chadbourne, the two players who complete the Holy Trinity of American free guitar improvisers. When he talks about growing up in the 50s and 60s, Williams comes across as a thoughtful charming and self-effacing eccentric. He cites a pivotal early musical moment as seeing The Rolling Stones and classical guitar master Andres Segovia on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. He recalls how Segovia imitated with a "startlingly ungainly clarity the sound of the parade drums coming up the street" — and how this approach would

feed deep into his own attempts to treat the guitar "as if it was an orchestra, or some sort of sound generator". The Stones would lead him back to the blues and an apprenticeship (while he was at college in Tuscaloosa) with Delta bluesman Johnny Shines. Williams fondly remembers Howlin' Wolf's enigmatic hunting partner as "a very kind and articulate teacher — both on the bandstand and off". Though he would later discover the American jazz tradition, and the avant garde composition of Ligeti, Nono and Stockhausen, Williams's playing has lost neither its earthy tone nor its unmistakable individuality, which eloquently attests to his early blues connections.

Williams speaks too of Tuscaloosa's early 70s "seminal proto-improvising scene", based around a house space called EROT, where he made his first forays into improvisation — "headache music", he remembers calling it — with a crew of local musicians including Ron Pate, Dick Foote, and LaDonna Smith. Viola player Smith later became Williams's wife (they are now divorced, but still play together), and in 1977 the pair set up the Trans Music label to document the scene. After moving to Birmingham in the early 80s, Williams's output moved up a notch. Funding was also easier back then, Williams recalls. "In the time before the Republicans declared 'the arts to be some kind of unwholesome sedition wherein our government gave taxpayers' hard-earned dollars to a bunch of traitors with nothing better to do than try to operate the Metropolitan Opera, or museums of art, or — God forbid — make new music." During this period he made lasting connections with musicians across the US and in Europe, as well as establishing the journal he still edits. The improviser, which has now moved onto the Web.

What sets Williams apart from many of his po-faced peers is a sense of humour bordering on the surreal. Like Chadbourne (with whom he recorded the 1998 album

*Wild Partners*), Steve Beresford, even Derek Bailey, humour both visual and aural is an integral part of his music. Surrealism — and the ideas of Andre Breton in particular — has provided Williams with a philosophy for using objects to play his guitar: it informs not just his music, but also his experiments in writing and a series of fried egg cartoons. For a decade or more, he was involved with the surrealist 'pluniverse', actively seeking out its leading US and European protagonists, writing articles both real and bogus for surrealist journals. But eventually the backstabbing and rabid competition between the various factions of the movement, the rigidity of the rules for "absolute divergence" from society grew tiresome. Williams's surrealism is now on a more personal level. "The surrealist revolution to which I am most devoted is a kind of insurgent humour, an earful of 'what the hell was that'!" he concludes. "Something that sounds and looks so remarkable that it could never have been thought of beforehand."

**ALAN CUPPINGS** *Numb Right Thumbs Texas Was Delicious is out now on Plegdon. The improviser magazine is online at [www.the-improviser.com](http://www.the-improviser.com)*



PHOTO: JONNY P. WILLIAMS

## Dylan Group

### Dynamic syncopators

Back in early 1998, London's Fat Cat Records released the first UK 12" from New York's Mice Parade, whose melodic drums and reversed guitar snarling seemed determined to carry on where My Bloody Valentine's *Loveless* left off. But what sounded like an unbearably octo-limbed supergroup turned out to be a solo project—the work (and play) of late twentysomething multi-instrumentalist Adam Pierce. The name Mice Parade revealed itself as an anagram which expressed Pierce's conflicted indie-boy-turned-breakbeat-aficionado attitude to electronic music.

It soon became audible that Mice Parade ran parallel to The Dylan Group, the duo Pierce had formed in 1996 with college friend and multi-instrumentalist Dylan Cristy. Both groups released tracks on Bubble Core, the label they founded and ran from Portchester, 45 minutes north of New York. Pierce and Cristy both trained as percussionists at Manhattanville College in Portchester back in the early 90s and stayed on after graduating. "I've been studying formal music since I was four, but Manhattanville College is what nearly made me stop," Pierce says. Still, their passion for polyrhythms is evident: a Dylan Group track leads with the full kit steering the track with catchy accents, doubling and tripling up polyrhythmic melodies of trills, zooms and streams of manimba, vibraphone and plucked guitar.

The pair orchestrates dynamics of drop and lift like the greatest arrangers. Their hard-to-find 1997 debut, it's *All About Remshots & Faulty Wings*, covered Aphex Twin's "Here Come The Music Makers" and Antonio Jobim's "Gel From Ipanema", a trait continued on this year's twinkling homage to The Orb's "Tower Of Doo". 1999's sequel, *More Adventures In Lying Down*, introduced swaggering Castilian horns and hushed duets for gamelan and manimba. Better still is Pierce's second Mice Parade album, the brilliant *Ramada* (inspired to "Galileo" with its tumbling pickled guitar, millisecond pause, stutter and surge of whitewater-rapid melody, it's amazing to discover that the album is a series of one track takes which he says uses "live performance to mimic sequencers and samples").

The Dylan Group's latest and best album, *Un-Along Search* (Uniklang is German for the "perfectless/essential tone"), reveals the duo's mutual fascination with live drum breaks and glide-guitar as a way of playing electronic music acoustically, or what Cristy calls "mimicking loops, sequences and samples live. We mean to take things that electronic music has given the world of modern music and do it live." When the German axes of To Rococo Roti Kriedel/Tanwate do this, the result is a ludicrous smugness. The Dylan Group, on the other hand, are maximalists to the core. Crossbreeding sequences and patterns with what jazz percussionist Ed Blackwell called "the co-ordinated independence" of drumming results in a restlessness that recalls from reduction

*Un-Along Search* reveals The Dylan Group to be addicted to dynamics. Rehearsing as a four-piece group with second bassist Scott McGovern and second drummer/trumpeter Scott Pesh, the group decamped to Bridgeport, Connecticut to jam live in what fellow Fat Cat artists Live Human call "improvisations" before editing and compressing the 95 minute result via ProTools software. On the drums, chiming "DAB", shrunk from a seven minute jam to three, Pierce pants out, "you can hear where we stuck ProTools on it: there's a middle part, 'shhh' and then it cuts".

While "Awila" comes on their signature of merging hands-on groove with the echo-delay magic of dub, the enchanting "The Road I Know" winds its way through a duet for mallet and urgent beats, vaulting onto a Castilian horn run before subsiding into gorgeously lachrymose lassitude. "Running In Pairs" combines wiring yet bruising MBV style guitars with clink-klang chimes and bustling fills. Maybe it's the discipline of duplicating these simplified circular patterns that curtails Pierce and Cristy's evident virtuosity, turning them away from the temptations of flash into the perpetual surprise of switch-back and lull.

Listen to Fridge, who nimbly remixed The Dylan Group's "If I Had Been Able" 12" last year, *TNT-era Tortoise*, *Frederick Galliano Presents The African Dvax*, or *R&B* maestro Rodney Jerkins's productions, and it's apparent that many musicians in the late 90s and early 00s are fascinated with tuned percussion. Those cyclic, circling mallet rhythmic leads you to the minimalism of Steve Reich, to Earth, Wind & Fire's awesome kalimba-powered "Bad Tune", or Soft Machine's only up to date "The Soft Weed Factor". The Dylan Group, however, locate their repetitive patterns in World Music. On the Bubble Core Website, you'll find Pierce enthusing about Malcom Abdallah Ghania's album of Moroccan Gnawa trance, *Invocatori*. "Go to South America, go to Africa, go to India, Indonesia," insists Pierce, "repetitive polyrhythmic patterns are the foundation of the music of all mankind until this century. Both we and electronic music are nodding to things greater than us." **KODWO ESHUN** *Un-Along Search* is out now on Fat Cat. Bubble Core Website: [www.bubblecore.com](http://www.bubblecore.com)

# K I N G C R I M S O N

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## Greg Kelley

### Microtonal sobriety

"I say I'm more interested in the sound than the systems," offers Greg Kelley, the trumpet-welding half of Boston's ultra-spacious improvising duo Ninpenjin. "I'm really fascinated by sonic phenomena such as difference-tones, acoustic beats, warbling and playing notes which are between the cracks, so in those terms, I'm interested in microtonality. But," he divulges, "I'm not particularly interested in the theory of it or its relation to the acoustical properties of sound."

In this sense, Kelley stands out from the majority of the East Coast movement that is the antithesis of that region's ecstatic jazz scene. "There's been an influx of younger players who are taking it from a different perspective, mixing things up with the noise scene, trying a low volume approach, or just trying to do things that interest them," is how Kelley describes this Boston/Cambridge improv community. "It's a pretty healthy environment. There are a lot of creative minds at work, yet it's not too crowded, and while opportunities may seem slim, they keep popping up."

As Ninpenjin's recordings — the name comes from the Latin phrase *ignotum PER ignotum*, or "the unknown through the more unknown" — have appeared over the past few years, Kelley has become one of the scene's more prominent voices. Their music is marked by tribal exploration, extreme fractionalisation and an erratic sense of flow, as Kelley and soprano saxophonist Bibo Rainey weave diligently through their musical conundrums. 1998's debut CD *44:36:5* found them in the company of percussionist Tatsuya Nakatani, who has since left the group, making the duo's dynamic even sparser, as displayed on their follow-up *This Is Ninpenjin* (1999), released like its predecessor, on Twisted Village. "It's opened up a number of possibilities," Kelley considers. "Obviously we have a little bit more room to

work with which allows us the choice of either playing much less and getting closer to silence or playing more without things getting too muddled. The ensemble aspects become much more agile and malleable, allowing for more rapid juxtapositions of ideas and more clear counterpoint."

Although he studied classical trumpet for four years at Baltimore's Peabody Conservatory, Kelley spent much productive time rummaging through the music library, and experimenting with the electronic music studios. "I've always been inquisitive about different kinds of music and really attracted to sound," Kelley reflects. "Generally I've always gravitated towards anything that fed my appetite for new sounds, whether it was modern classical, weird rock, noise or whatever. So that got me in the doorway, and now I'm trying to make sense of it all. As a player, I prefer improvisation because it allows me to get inside the music on a deeper level. I think the most important thing is the quality of attention to the music throughout the entire process, whether it be writing, performing or freely extrapolating."

Of the new music in general, and the trumpet in particular, Kelley feels that the parameters are still being pushed. "I think it's certainly expanding, and more and more trumpet players are cropping up these days who are interested in exploring the horn's timbral possibilities. After Bill Dixon, there was Toshiron Kondo, and now there's Axel Dörner and Raresh Mehta. As more people start hearing players like them, they'll realise that there's a lot of room to explore."

For their third recording, *In Which The Skene Pattern-Director Is No Longer Able To Make His Point To The Industrial Dreamer (Interactivist)*, Ninpenjin opted to extend the palette by adding electronic manipulator Jason Lescaudet on two tracks. "I really enjoy working with electronics," Kelley admits. "Depending on what type is being used, the pacing and the kinds of sounds possible are very different and it can move things into a different realm. Jason's great to work with because he's got a fantastic ear and because he's using tape loops, interacting with him is completely different than with an instrumentalist. In general, I like the sonic possibilities and the 'otherness' that electronics can bring to an occasion."

With nearly a dozen different musical projects brewing at any given moment, Kelley has no problems staying busy, yet perhaps he puts his conception to the greatest test when playing solo. "It really puts a microscope on the types of material I'm using and what I'm doing with them. Is this a technical display? Am I noodling? What am I trying to say?" So I end up paying extreme attention to the details sometimes. Leading me to trip over myself, which can be interesting too."

Still in his mid-twenties, Kelley is just coming into his own artistically. "There's a hell of a lot going on that I'm really excited about investigating further," Kelley declares. "Whether it's musicians, film makers, writers or whatever, I'm constantly on the lookout for whole worlds that I've barely skimmed the surface of — and think God they still keep presenting themselves to me."

**JOHN C MORGAN** Bibo Rainey & Greg Kelley's Ninpenjin is out now on Selection

## hitstream

So you thought musicians hated to be pigeon-holed. Like Martin Luther ruling his 95 Theses to the wall of the Schlosskirche at Wittenberg, **John Zorn** has pamphleted American record stores in an effort to create a reformation of the avant-garde. His *A Guide To The New Generation Of The Avant-Garde* was written and distributed in response to the current "bad for 'avant-garde'" music with the hope that "Some [record stores] may decide to move selected artists from their present place in classical, jazz or rock into the avant-garde section where they will be surrounded by musicians who have been directly influenced by their work. It is our feeling that the clarity of this recontemplation will help bring this to a new light and a larger audience." Artists submitted for re-canonisation include Art Ensemble Of Chicago, Derek Bailey, Gavin Bryars, Glenn Branca, Conlon Nanorow, David Tudor, what looks like the complete roster of Zorn's Tzadik label, and, er, Whitehouse. All well and good, but The Traileer wonders why the likes of Ornette Coleman, Christian Marclay, Charlemagne Palestine, not to mention the entire populations of the HipHop Nation and the Global Electronica Network, failed to make the list. Seems like the new categories are just as exclusive and one-dimensional as the old. +++ One high-art organisation not afraid to expand its definition of new, experimental music is **Austria's Ars Electronica**. The organisation has just awarded its annual Prix Ars Electronica for Digital Music to **Carsten Nicolai** of the Raster-Notion label for his 1999-2000 *20*. In 2000 CD series. The winner was chosen by a jury made up of Matt Simon, Hugo's Peter Rehberg, Zeena Parkins, Robin Rimbaud and writer Kodwo Eshion. Other musicians singled out by the jury included Gonsim. For their groundbreaking *Phenetic* release, and Chris Watson, the former *Culture Vulture* tape-operator who now trapes the world's wildest location recordings of natural phenomena, environmental soundscapes and indigenous musics. The Ars Electronica festival proper takes place in Linz the September. Info from [www.wae.at](http://www.wae.at) +++ Rumburging from Prospect 23. This July, Vinyl will be releasing its first album in 16 years by that legendary 'scat-metal, urban gamelan troupe. **23 Skidoon**. The group has forged links with the fine UK Hip-hop label, Boinn. So it's no surprise to find the album will feature a guest appearance from Roots Manuva, as well as some celestial wax from Pariah's Roderic. Reissues of the Skids' 80s recordings such as *Seven Songs: Teaming Up The Plans and The Cubing Is Coming*, which have been out of print for years, may well follow. +++ **Dug City Books**, the print offshoot of the Chicago label of the same name, are about to publish *Spoon*, a collection of writings by guitarist **John Fahey** whose latest CD *Hilom* is released this month by the new UK label *Livhouse* ([www.livhouse.com](http://www.livhouse.com)). Meanwhile, Fahey's book on the great Country blues guitarist *Charley Patton* remains tantalisingly out of print. +++ This month's award for filling your album with the most unlikely array of guest artists goes to another guitarist, **Gary Lucas**. The former *Phish* Band members' new *Knitting Factory* album features appearances by Nick Cave, ex-New York Doll David Johansson, Eric Ino of Charles Mingus, DJ Spooky, Mary Margaret O'Hara, and in something of a coup, Lucas's old employer, Captain Beefheart himself. **THE TRAILER**







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This month, London's Hayward Gallery hosts **Sonic Boom**, the largest exhibition of international **sound art** ever seen in the UK. In celebration of the year 2000's flourishing new medium, we provide a background for the event

Over the following 15 pages, **Sonic Boom's** curator David Toop recounts his fact-finding mission to Japan; Brian Eno and Christian Marclay highlight their own pioneering techniques of visualising sound and noise; and Indonesia's Heri Dono gives a perspective from the developing world. For full details of the exhibition, visit [www.haywardgallery.org.uk](http://www.haywardgallery.org.uk)



"I like things that are on the edge between being recognisable and not recognisable, between being comfortable and slightly ominous, let's say, slightly unsettling," explains Brian Eno as eight wisps of sound slowly unturl around his measured voice. Gently expanding outwards from their sources — the CD boomboxes

positioned at different points and heights around his West London workspace-cum-retreat — they head off or merge with the distant workaday city noises drifting in from the outside. The music's now hovering in shimmering layers, like a heat haze above a freshly tarmacked road, now haphazardly striking an uncommonly beautiful phantom chord when a heavily processed voice, timestretched and pitchshifted into a shape beyond human utterance, accidentally makes contact with a low end drone coming the other way. "I don't want them to be completely unpredictable but I don't want them to be chaotic either," Eno continues, intermittently breaking off to instruct his assistant Marlon Weyeneth to adjust levels or volumes. "So there's always a lot of cusps involved, just the place where something could change into something else, where it could go this or that way, and spends a lot of time being balanced between the two."

Like the music he has set in motion, Eno in the flesh maintains an aura of Zen-like calm at the centre of ceaseless activity. His time is in heavy demand — keeping up with the War Child charity he set up with U2 in the wake of the Bosnian war, picking up his own two children from school, imitating an intriguing new experiment in spoken word and sound, and, most pressingly, completing his latest installation called *Place for the Sonic Boom* exhibition. His desk is littered with scraps of paper on which he habitually scribbles diagrams or pie charts to illustrate a point. Throughout the meeting, he leaps up from the desk to pull down the box of gels and slides from which he is making up the visual component of his installation, or to demonstrate his Photoshop transformations of light and shade, or to point out a sound source from a boombox, without ever losing that Buddha pose. Indeed, he is his own best argument for the efficacy of his installations in inducing calm, balanced yet productive states of mind.

In the past he has said that he was trying to create an atmosphere somewhere between a gentleman's club and a religious retreat. His airspaces act as oases from modern city noise. In 1983 he set up 36 video monitors as the sole light sources in a pitch black hall in Tokyo's La Foret Museum, bathing visitors in barely moving pictures of the Manhattan skyline. In the dark, the music's ever-shifting focus somehow dissolved the physical dimensions of the space, but once you had adjusted to the giddy effect, the experience was more transporting than unsettling. His *Sonic Boom* room promises a similar interplay of darkness, light-source images and multipoint ambient sounds.

# silent

**Brian Eno's** sound installations, oases of peace



"These shows are the most unusual thing I do," asserts Eno, "because nobody else does anything like them. They really are something that I have developed alone, and they occupy this funny little niche that really nothing else does. It's not cinema, but people stay there for that length of time, like they

would for a film. Very often people are in there for half an hour or two hours. It's not painting but it somehow calls up the same sort of appreciation that paintings would -- it's visual, two dimensional a lot of it. It's not sculpture, it's not performance, it's not exactly music, although those are all a big part of it. It is something that really stands between a lot of other things.

"A lot of the fascination with these shows is," he continues, "you have an idea what it is, you just don't know how it is made. It's not quite like anything you have seen before. You are thinking, is it three dimensional or is it flat, how is it made up, what's making it change, because it is changing all the time, and it's quite unusual to be faced with visual sensations that are actually quite unfamiliar, you really don't know what you are seeing. That's the thrill of these shows for me. It is the dynamic of knowing that it is very simple, that what you are seeing is three slides overlaid, that's all it's very very simple, and this, what you are hearing is eight CDs with not much information on them. And you think, God that's so interesting, that with so little basic material you can explore so many permutations and find them interesting. It takes a long time for your mind to say, 'Look, I have seen all these elements before and I am no longer interested in the permutations of them.' It is a sort of lesson in minimalism. But where the idea of minimalism was 'less is more', unfortunately it's very often turned out that 'less was less'. Well, this takes the idea that you don't have to start with very much, but you just let them multiply against each other and that gives you a huge amount."

The greater Eno's preoccupation with large-scale installation work, the less interested he has become in producing music for home consumption, where he has no control over the listening environment. If he dears to determine the conditions under which his music should be heard sounds somewhat megalomaniac, his beckoning oases of calm are hardly the work of a power-craved Gesamtkunstwerker

or to Stockhausen or Wagner. On the contrary, they're the places where his theories about Ambient music are brought to their fullest fruition.

"For me, it's the ideal thing," Eno affirms. "It makes sense of the music. The whole thing I have been saying about Ambient music for such a long time is that it is something to do with immersion, it is something to do with making a space that you go into. Well, this is of course exactly that. It's not like giving someone a record and saying 'Make a space for yourself which includes this music.' It says, 'Here is the musical space.' Because the music comes from lots of points in space, you are very aware of the three dimensionality of it. You are very aware of music as a spatial event, which is a big part of it for me, and it's very nice when you experience that, and when you become aware that that sound comes from there and that one comes from over there, and this lag one occupies most of the floor area or whatever. It is a really different way of hearing music when you hear it as a sort of sound sculpture."

By which he means?

"Well, one of the first things it does to you as a listener is, it invites you to be active in the space because you become aware that everywhere you sit is a different mix, basically you know, you mix the piece by moving around. So that's one thing. The other thing is, it's much less like music and much more like nature. In nature, you don't hear things coming from two speakers at you. You hear that bird up here, and that over there, and that car over there. By nature I don't mean out in the fields, necessarily, I mean ordinary listening, if you like."

"One narrative within music in the 20th century was the move away from music as a separated-off form of listening, to music being more and more like listening to the rest of the world," he continues. "This is what John Cage was talking about, and in an inverted way what Satie was talking about as well -- breaking down the insulation around music and making it more like ordinary listening, so the same ears that you listen to the world could be brought to music. One of the messages of this multipoint way of listening is saying, 'Don't expect the music to come out of the same holes as it used to do before, don't expect it to be the same language any longer.' Because any new kind of music is nearly always attended by a new kind of listening."



Eno's Kite Stories installation (1999)



PHOTOS: PETER WESTERMARK/REX USA

# retreats

amid the noise of the city, where his Ambient theories are most fully realised. Words: Rika Koop



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Sonic Boom curator **David Toop** visits the Japanese capital to network with a gaggle of young



a mobile phone. Such quintessential Margatoric images now belong to all of us.

There's no question that computer communications have made exchanges between like-minded individuals very easy. This has also closed gaps. Musicians now communicate and collaborate globally at a dizzy rate and their feeling of where they are placed in relation to ideas, technology, the musical zeitgeist, media, artistic pecking

orders and the global economy has changed dramatically. During my first trip to Japan in 1993 I experienced acute, intensely pleasurable sensations of physical and cultural distance. This time I felt more of a sense that physical connections were being consolidated to fill in the absences that are left by e-mail, Websites and the more fugitive strains of digital sound work.

Such thoughts were pertinent to my reason for traveling to Japan in January. Max Eastley and I had been invited to exhibit and perform in an exhibition called Sound Art — Sound As Media, held at the ultra hi-tech ICC gallery in Tokyo Opera City Tower in Shinjuku. ICC was launched in 1997 by the Japanese phone company, NTT, as a celebration of 100 years of telephone communication. In recent years, telephone pioneers Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Watson have been inducted into some of the more interesting histories of 20th century music and Minoru





## electronic sound artists, and finds the megalopolis as perplexing as ever

Matanaka, the curator of Sound Art — Sound As Media, seemed intent on underlining this subterranean link between sound art, new music and digital communications. So the exhibition ranged across the type of contemporary sound work that might be interpreted by one listener as weird science and by another as a form of esoteric dance music — the Touch, Wix, Mille Plateaux axis that can encompass artists as different yet as compatible as Ryoji Ikeda, Marc Behrens, Minoru Sato and Christophe Charles.

For me, it's unusual to be in one city, other than London, for more than a few days, unusual also, as well as challenging, to be exhibiting an installation, performing music and giving a lecture. Having struggled through some confusing moments in the past with public speaking in Japan, the lecture was causing me some misgivings. What

I've come to realise, fairly late in life, is that everything *yuuji* can evolve into something else. Take jet lag. Lying fully awake in my hotel room at 5am, feeling too shattered to do anything other than drink green tea and enjoy an Optrex eye mask, I found myself listening to environmental sounds and sorting them, analysing every grain, following their directionality and fantasising about both their likely and improbable sources.

Two hours before my ICC lecture was due to begin, I sat down and wrote an account of these jet lagged reveries: the perpetual low frequency hum that disappeared if I lifted my head from the pillow, the bath water running in the next room, the crows soaring and wheeling like demonic familiars outside my 12th floor window, the mournful note, or double note, the lament of a jilted whale or a ship becalmed in fog. Trying to locate this siren song for five nights. I could only hear it in

my room. Was it seeping through the walls, the ceiling or the floor? Maybe the source was the beer machine so conveniently located just outside my door, or perhaps the sound of my own nostalgia. I failed to pin it down. Then there were other sounds, some of them so peripheral that they had to be residual traces of sound artists dreaming.

In my speculation, these were strange dreams. Carl Michael Von Hausswolff sleepwalking through the English pub we had discovered in the basement of Tokyo City Opera Tower, with its fish and chips, noodle omelettes and draught Guinness, a battery's Brandon LaBelle, feverish after eating foods of unknown origin, Carsten Nicola, no doubt dreaming of clumsy baggage handlers dropping a succession of gigantic glass jars intended for Noto installations around the world (not that such a disaster had the remotest chance of being perpetrated by ICC's wireless, ultra-efficient staff).

Having decided not to delve further into such sound art fictions, at least in public, I found that my brief lecture sidestepped the misunderstandings of previous occasions. Japanese audiences have a reputation for being polite, so I was surprised, charmed, then irritated by a young man in a diffident who trapped me in a corner after our concert. "Quite good," he allowed, "but it was too long." He pointed to one of Max Eastley's sound sculptures, a circle of bamboo and said "Was the circle really necessary?" He asked I wondered aloud if anything was really necessary in the greater scheme of things. "Don't you think the audience should close their eyes when they listen," he insisted. I explained that in a progressive society such demands are impossible to enforce without firearms.

The following evening I was tired, restless from persistent jet lag, multiple interviews and an exhilarating shopping trip that yielded a box set of Kurosawa film soundtracks, Minoru Miki's *Batoules For Koto Solo*, John Coltrane's *Infinity*, the soundtracks to *Ghost In The Shell*, *Kwaidan*, *Madame White Snake* and an Otomo Yoshihide compilation of Professor Takeo Yamashita's incredible TV scores from 1965-75. Probably the most significant factor in my exhaustion was the interview in which I was faced with a bootleg CD of an album by singer-songwriter Simon Finn. Released in 1970 on a tiny Progressive rock label based in Chalk Farm, the record was withdrawn after about a week for a copyright infringement of the *Sartre* music advert. Paul Burwell and I backed up the terminally obscure Mr Finn on various instruments, and for 30 years we have felt secure in the knowledge that his record has been erased from history. To learn that it has become a cult item among Japanese psychodrama obsessives was distressing yet perversely flattering.

While I was still in shock, Max Eastley, Michael Von Hausswolff's partner Marietta Von Baumgarten and Peter Hagdahl, exhibiting at ICC in collaboration with Hausswolff, dragged me under protest to Heights Gallery in the Setagaya district, for an evening called *Noise As Silence*. This was, frankly, the last entertainment on earth I would have chosen for that particular night, yet I became mesmerised by the music as it unfolded. Somehow compressing art gallery, record



David Toop

shop, performance space, bar and lavatory into cubic volume just sufficient for a Costa Coffee shop. Heights Gallery was full to bursting with a young and ferociously intent crowd. Already in progress was a typical year 2000 jam session. Carl Michael Von Hausswolff, Carsten Nicola and Shuncho Okada squeezed together like the three monkeys, hunched over two laptop computers and a mixing desk. Christophe Charles in the audience with another laptop, and in relatively distant regions of the audience area, two mixing desk specialists who I assumed from reading or misreading the poster, were Sumihisa Arima and autom@t (obliquely relevant to this story is that as I typed the last name my computer insisted on connecting me to the Internet).

The hushed precision and intimacy of this group improvisation — all snicks and zits, blushed murmurs, light bulb keening, hair clippers and the tremble of underfloor heating systems — managed to remind me simultaneously of the SME's *Kayoban* album of 1968, albeit projected forward to the digital future in which we suddenly live, and the sounds of my Shinku hotel room. Assuming that the night's trajectory was almost complete, I failed to notice that dramatic changes were afoot on stage using the word stage in a purely metaphorical sense. As veteran nose guitarist Tetsuo Furudate took a circular saw to proceedings with his reverberant electric violin, vocalist Yuriko

Watanabe began 'tuning' his mixing desk and microphone with the mannered gestures of a fop at the court of Louis XIV. When Watanabe finally decided that the equipment was ready for him, he unleashed the voice, a nerve-ringing counterpoint of a thing that suited the preceding communication about as naturally as a Carmelite nuns playing *Grand Theft Auto*. Although I couldn't help feeling sympathy for the laptop contingent — wisely wiring with the noble exception of Christophe Charles —

the clash of these two renegade solar systems was as unexpected and gripping as anything I've seen on a music stage in recent years.

**“ I found myself listening to environmental sounds, analysing every grain, fantasising about their likely and improbable sources ”**

In my limited experience, every event in Japan ends cheerfully with a banquet.

The Sound Art — Sound As Media banquet was convened at a fairly traditional sort of restaurant where the Europeans spent the entire evening figuring out (a) where to put their legs, and (b) what medium the food breathed in a former life. As Furudate told me stories of playing with Merzbow and Keiji Hano and the beer flowed, somebody discovered that the monstrous karaoke system was armed with a version of "Anarchy In The UK". Nobody rose to that challenge, though Michael Von Hausswolff spoke for his homeland with a salacious and physically vigorous treatment of Abba's "Gimme Gimme Gimme (A Man After Midnight)" and one of the Japanese youths getting drunk and rowdy at the adjacent table freestyled some Hiroko rhymes over ustemo pop. I considered a stab at "You Make Me Feel Brand New", but was humbled by the authentic 60s wildness of Minoru Hatanaka's "You Really Got Me". This, I noted for future reference, is how curators should behave. ICC Centre Website: [www.nitcc.co.jp](http://www.nitcc.co.jp). Heights Gallery: 1-45-36, Kitazawa Setagaya-ku, Tokyo tel 00 81 3 3469 1659.



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"It may seem like a contradiction, but I'm interested in sound, not just for how it sounds, but also for how it looks," says Christian Marclay in a dressing room deep among the postmodern pipes of Paris's Pompidou Centre. The crux of Marclay's 20-year career has been an obsession with the relationship of sound and object. Not only is the New York-based artist/musician a pioneering turntablist, whose conceptual sonic collages and confrontational stance towards the record industry have had a defining impact on the avant-garde music scene, he has also led a parallel creative life making installations which express sonic information in visual terms. Take, for instance, the pieces he presented earlier this year at the Pompidou. In the rarefied environment of *Le Temps, Vite!* (Time, Quickly!), an exhibition celebrating the start of the new millennium, a cylindrical pile of LPs made up his *Endless Column*; silent witnesses to a bygone musical past. Close by in a glass cabinet squatted *The Beatles*, a pillow crocheted from audiotape containing The Fab Four's complete recordings. Its prosaic and reassuring form evoked the nostalgic aura that has come to replace the hysterical fan worship of their heyday. Between the two lay his *Mobius Loop*, a snake-like

# jumpcut jockey

With installations, vinyl sculptures and use of ready-made records, turntablist **Christian Marclay**

assemblage of found cassettes. A mixture that included housewives' choice trash (*Barry Manilow's Greatest Hits*) or self-help tapes (*How To Get Results With People*), these mute artefacts likewise conjured up long-forgotten soundworlds, made all the more poignant by their dormant, silent state. In common with Marclay's other installation pieces, which have been exhibited more frequently in art spaces around the world in the past few years, *Mobius Loop* hovers on the cusp of art and music. As he puts it: "A record is an object, a thing, it's visual, and it contains music. Is that not related?"

For a genre-defying artist such as Marclay, jumping from art to music and back again is all in a day's work. He recently performed in the basement of the Pompidou Centre, several floors down from the exhibition, in front of a very different audience made up of dehard music fans. It was an opportunity to witness his formidable performance skills; a tall, spare figure bent over his turntables, he delivered staccato salvos of quickfire





redefines the roles of composer and consumer. Words: Rahma Khazam. Main photo: Edie Vee



manipulations, while orchestrating a symphony of abrasive scratches, unearthly drones and gunshot scenes. Playing alongside him were two young DJs, Brooklyn scion DJ Olive of Wee and French whizzed Erik M. They belong to a new generation of turntable artists who have been influenced by Marclay's distinctive brand of sonic activism. "For a long time I didn't have other DJs to play with. The only other DJs were HipHop DJs, and I tried, but they weren't interested," laments Marclay. Instead, he appears in more familiar company as one of the avant-garde luminaries contributing to Sonic Youth's recent *Goodbye 20th Century* album, and has been performing extensively in a trio with Lee Ranaldo and free drummer William Hooker. The rest of his time has been taken up with growing commitments on the art circuit. Last year's engagements included the Venice Biennale, as well as installations in Prague and Lyon. He is currently working on photos, sculptures and videos for a number of shows, and recently completed a video installation for London's Sonic Boom exhibition. A typically laconic piece, *Guitar Drop* shows an amplified electric guitar being dragged behind a truck. Its loud, rasping soundtrack and violent imagery allude to the recent racist murder in Texas, but also to rock 'n' roll, guitar bashing, Fluxus performances, art history, trucks and cars, rollovers and violence. Like his other video pieces, it exploits the sonic and visual possibilities of the medium in new and imaginative ways. *Telephones* (1995), for instance, is a collage of clips from classic Hollywood movies and contemporary films featuring ringing telephones, and characters engaged in phone conversations. Kneading together these sequences to form a suspenseful narrative, it pokes fun at cinema's reverential treatment of the telephone. *Up And Out* (1998) is a similarly disconcerting comment on the mobility of cut movies here. Marclay has replaced the 1960s soundtrack of Antonioni's film *Blow Out* with that of Brian De Palma's 1980s remake *Blow Out*, so that the viewer watches the original while listening to the remodel.

Marclay has always had to juggle his musical commitments and his desire to make art. Yet despite his enduring musical achievements, he has not allowed his career as a turntablist to overshadow his visual work. "Because I'm more trained as a visual artist than I am as a musician. I never studied music, so I just did what came through my mind. I feel like I have a better grasp of what I'm doing as a visual artist. When I started, I never thought I would end up making music. I'd always spent my time in sculptors' studios and I viewed my work with sound as I would a sculpture."

Born in California in 1955 and brought up in Switzerland, Marclay spent the mid-70s studying art in Geneva, where he came into contact with Ecart, an active Fluxus group. The Fluxus movement had a critical attitude towards music — in particular, the musics surrounding classical music — and his experiences there exerted a lasting influence. "Fluxus music was very minimal," he recalls, "in the sense that the actions it involved were quite simple and did not require any formal musical training. It was the same freedom I found in punk music, where musicians would form a group and learn to play their instruments as they went along." But an even more important aspect of punk, as far as Marclay was concerned, was its theatricality. Indeed punk, and certain performance artists of the 70s, including body-art exorcist Vito Acconci, played equal parts in shaping Marclay's musical outlook. "Punk's physical presence and attitude weren't so far removed from the work of certain exponents of performance art, such as Dan Graham, Vito Acconci or Laurie Anderson," he remarks. "Another influence was Joseph Bovey. Performance art interested me and it was through my desire to do performances that I began to make music."

By the late 70s, he had enrolled at the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston, where he formed a music-performance duo with fellow student Kurt Henry called The Bachelors. Even Marclay sang while Henry played guitar, and they created aural and visual rhythms using film loops from cartoons. The group's performances were extremely physical: they would chop wood with an axe, smash mirrors and neon lights, and explode television sets on stage. Like Fluxus and punk before him, Marclay was seeking to demystify the physical act of music-making, focusing the audience's attention on "the

way in which the sounds were made and the gesture that produced the sound." It was also a way of connecting sounds with images, of making music with a visual dimension. In 1979, during his stint with The Bachelors, Even Marclay stumbled upon the idea that was to be the basis of his future career as a turntablist. "I used to play cassettes during the performances on which I had taped loops taken from old records. Then it occurred to me to play the records on stage in order to show how the sound was produced."

Marclay may have taken the name of his group The Bachelors. Even from Marcel Duchamp's famous *Large Glass*, but the surrealist's groundbreaking development of the readymade has proved more relevant to Marclay's visual work, even though his music makes liberal use of found sound fragments lifted from LPs. "Thinking of the record as a readymade — as 'readymade music' — introduced something for me, but it's always reinvented by my performance and manipulations. I don't just take a record, but I appropriate and manipulate it and make something new out of something old."

Marclay's record manipulations would horrify vinyl fetishists. His 'Recycled Records' are collages made by cutting up discs and sticking them back together in different combinations, while an average live improvisation finds him playing records backwards or at different speeds, and preparing them with stickers or paint. Of course, there are precedents: early experimentalists such as composer Darius Milhaud or Bauhaus artist Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, who were investigating the potential of turntables back in the 20s and 30s, John Cage and the musique concrete composers, and Polish artist



Marclay's DJ Trio with DJ Olive and Erik M. Left: Footstep (Larich Sheddille, 1985)

Milan Knezak who, unknown to Marclay at first, had been producing 'Broken Music' from records back in the mid-60s.

But although Knezak used similar methods, his art pranks bore little relation to Marclay's complex musical cut-ups. As for the more refined musique concrete productions and, for that matter, Cage's conceptual experiments, they had little impact on his work at this early stage. "Cage and the musique concrete people also used records, and they did eventually become references. But when I started using my records, it wasn't so much a conscious decision to make music or musique concrete, but experimenting with the idea of performance. I was definitely more aware of their work than I was of HipHop DJs when I started. I mean, I didn't know what HipHop was." Not that the likes of Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash had much to teach him at that point. In 1982, Marclay claimed in an interview with a local New York newspaper that he could scratch as well, if not better, than the majority of the city's spinners. Whether or not it was true, his sole collaboration with a HipHop DJ — he performed with Jazzy Joyce in Tokyo in 1991 — proved unsatisfactory for reasons that had more to do with HipHop's reliance on rhythm, and its limited source material, than questions of technique. As Marclay puts it, "Our outlooks are so different. HipHop DJs make dance music, and that's something I've never tried to do."

In 1978, New York was in the throes of a period of intense cross-fertilisation, and the No Wave movement was in full swing. Marclay came to the city that year on a collage exchange programme, and found himself right in the heart of this frenzied activity. Art

music people would come to clubs, and you would find Dan Graham performing at the Mudd Club, and Nam June Paik at CBGBs," he recalls. Groups like DNA and Glenn Branca's Theoretical Girls were fashioning strange musical hybrids by applying minimalist discipline to rock power. Attracted by the directness of their performances, Marclay organised a festival based around them called *Eventworks* in Boston. "I brought a lot of people over: DNA, Nam, Rhys Chatham and Carole Annage, Dan Graham—people who were doing interesting things in relation to rock music. I was looking at performance art through my interest in punk and rock music and seeing how they influenced the performance movement. And then I went back to New York and got involved in music." One of the first musicians with whom Marclay played in New York was John Zorn, who also included him early on in many of his *Game Pieces*. Marclay met a number of his future collaborators during these seasons. "There was a very active scene in New York in the early 80s, and there were a lot of very small, very alternative clubs. John even had a little club in the storefront of his building called the Saint. The audiences were very small, but then we would all go to Europe to play for large audiences and make some money." In those days, Marclay was the only turntable artist on the New York music scene operating outside the Hip-Hop milieu, but he persevered nonetheless. "I was lucky enough to be in an environment that appreciated it [the musicians I was working with] encouraged me to do what I was doing, and they could hear something interesting, more in a way than I could." Throughout the 1980s, he collaborated with such sparring partners as Elliott Sharp, David Moss, John Zorn, Terko, Zeena Parkins, Butch Morris and Fred Frith, honing the formidable improvisational skills that have become an integral part of his sets. "I like improvisation because it allows you to interact with others," he explains. "Music lends itself to working with others, and that has always been a difference with regard to my work as a visual artist, where I tend to work alone."

Towards the end of the 80s, Marclay's career as an artist took off in earnest. Some of his best pieces date back to this period, among them *Endless Column* (1988) and *Bone Yard* (1990)—the latter a mound of 1000 hydrostone casts shaped like telephone receivers resembling a pile of bones. Like the majority of Marclay's visual works, they exuded a deep, pregnant silence. "My pieces are silent so that you can fill in the blank. I want people to use their memory, their own memory. Memory is our own recording device, so instead of imposing a standardised memory like a record, we have our own personal memories, which are more selective," he explains. "Music often has the power to trigger memories, but images can also do so. You might see something that visually reminds you of a certain kind of music, or you might project your own sounds onto an image. A lot of my work is about how image is expressive of sound, how sound is expressed visually." Some of Marclay's works have a mystical, esoteric quality about them: the synaesthetic ideal of the *Gesamtbauwerk*, or the sound sculptures of Harry Partch, who regarded music as a magical, ritualistic experience, are cases in point. However, Marclay's assemblages of found objects are rooted in everyday life: it is the social and cultural significance of these objects that interests him. The empty, half-open instrument cases of *Accompagnement Musical* (1995) evoke long vanished



Branche (Berlin OAAD Gallery, 1994)



The Brevier (crocheted magnetic tape, 1989)

symphonies, *Interiors* (1996), a series of rooms decorated with wallpaper, cushions and curtains bearing musical motifs, sheds new light on Sade's notion of furniture music, while *Brashears* (1994) conjures up various poetic images and associations. Here, Marclay scattered birdseed on hollowed-out loudspeakers, and placed them on a balcony for the birds to perch on.

A few of his pieces incorporate both sound and visuals, as in one of his most striking installations, *Footsteps* (1989). For this piece, he covered the floor of the Shedhalle in Zurich with 3500 vinyl discs on which he had recorded the sound of his own footsteps. Visitors to the exhibition walked all over the records, after which they were removed, packaged and sold. As Marclay explains, "Footsteps was a comment on the notion of the recording as a finished product which cannot undergo any alteration. I was interested in how each album became a one of a kind record that was damaged differently, and in creating a certain confusion between what was recorded and what was 'damaged'. The kind of rhythm you get from the scratch on a record is pretty similar to footsteps: the clicking of heels on a surface resembles the clicking of a needle, the scratch. So you get this accidental mix between the two." A recent project titled *The Sounds Of Christmas*, which he presented at the ArtPlace Foundation for Contemporary Art in San Antonio, Texas, likewise functioned on different levels. On this occasion, he collected 1000 Christmas records and invited local DJs to remix them. The collection of records also existed as a database held on a computer in the gallery, and videos of the record covers were projected on the walls. Marclay reasons, "I'm as much interested in how that Christmas music is packaged and how important that visual presence is, as to offer this collection, this archive as a tool for other DJs to use—a music that DJs in general would never use. So I'm interacting with different fields here, with the young DJ community in the city of San Antonio, and their stereotypes, and the schmaltzy Christmas music which is so seasonal and so reshaped a dozen times that are reinterpreted every year."

By the mid-90s, Marclay was performing less frequently as a result of his increasing involvement in art. However, a new generation of turntablists, who were big fans of his work, were emerging from the underground parties of New York's liblib movement. "There were people like DJ Olive and Spooky, who were quite active on the new DJ scene, and their interest in my work encouraged me to perform again," he says. "I had a new audience, but also a new group of musicians to perform with, this time playing the same instrument."

In 1996, Marclay staged the first performance of his 'DJ Trio' project—a piece for three turntablists which he performs regularly with different musicians. Although he usually likes to improvise without a structure for the Trio he gives the performers a general outline, cueing them with hand signals to trigger synchronised changes. Participants have included DJ Spooky, Otomo Yoshihide, and Toshio Kawamura, but one of the most memorable performances of the piece featured DJ Olive and Erik M in a classical concert hall in Cologne, with an added ensemble of 15 classical flautists. He expands, "DJ Trio is about putting DJs in a group context: If we accept the DJ as a musician, then the DJ must be treated like a musician, and allowed to perform in a

**“Memory is our own recording device. Music has the power to trigger our own personal memories, but images can also do so”**



group, to create collectively. This is not about the old idea of the DJ as a soloist, dishing beats to a dancing crowd." Indeed, for Marclay, the test of a good DJ is his ability to play in a group. "In order to create collectively, you have to let go of the ego," he continues. "But D.J.s don't always have the skills to listen and play with others. That's why I like playing with Dave and Erik because they're sensitive players."

Marclay's turntable collages deliberately foreground residual sounds such as scratches, clicks and pops, drawing attention to the medium rather than the music. Indeed, these sounds of wear and tear are an inherent part of his performances. "What I try to do is acknowledge the presence of records and turntables sonically, not just visually, so you hear the record, you hear the turntable, those are sounds. In traditional DJing, the scratching is the only sound that reveals the record more clearly. A lot of the time it is about the skills of the DJ, the taste of the DJ and the selection of the DJ more than it is about the turntables and the process. The process for me is very important, and I don't want you to forget that I'm mixing records: you're always going to hear that." His work is also a critique of consumerism. He recycles records purchased in thrift stores, finding a use for each of them. "You find an interesting sound on each record, even if it's just a very small fragment. So it's always a discovery and a mystery to buy a record. A record is always full of expectation." He also takes pride in his old Caliform turntables, which used to be standard equipment in the audio-visual departments of American schools. "They're very resistant and they have four speeds, so they have a lot of possibilities," says Marclay, whose predilection for ancient equipment has not prevented him from engaging in virtuoso displays — he employs between three and eight turntables on regular gigs. "I've used 100," he asserts referring to his notorious concert at Tokyo's Panasonic Hall in 1991, at which he was assisted by Jazzy Joyce, Nicolas Collins and Otomo Yoshihide.

Marclay's focus has always been on live performance, on bringing the "dead" sounds preserved on records back to life. His numerous collaborative albums may well lack the excitement and physicality of his live shows, but that doesn't detract from their appeal. On *Live*, a duo with Gunter Müller on drums and electronics released on Müller's For 4 Ears label, schizoid tunes and terse filmic fragments merge with a variety of creaks, groans and taps to form a semi-ordered changing tapestry of sounds, whose origins are sometimes hard to identify. "I like that confusion," he comments. "It has to do with Gunter's live processing of his drum sound." Marclay has also collaborated extensively with such percussionists as David Moss and William Hooker. "There's something about drums being very abstract and giving me room to improvise," he explains.

More than mere documents of his music, Marclay's recordings serve as a critique of the vinyl object itself. *Record Without A Cover*, for instance, prefigured *Footsteps*, as its name indicates, it was sold without a cover, and the dirt and scratches it accumulated over time made each copy unique. The process also called into question the status of the composer, for as Marclay points out, "I no longer had the final say over the result." More *Encores* is an entirely different proposition. Released in 1988, this early

glunderphonic masterpiece features Marclay spinning extracts from albums by John Cage, Louis Armstrong, Johann Strauss, Martin Denny and Manó Gállos, among others.

Another significant release is *Records*, a compilation of pieces from 1981–89. Fluctuating between the bleak pessimism of "Neutral" and the disorientating mayhem of "Night Music", its dislocated textures, brooding undertones and wheezy, half-buried groans foreshadow the dark, deconstructed experiments of Illbient. Forthcoming releases include an album with Elliott Sharp, due for release in June. A CD with fellow turntablist Otomo Yoshihide is also in the works. "Otomo is an interesting DJ and his way of working is similar to mine," says Marclay. "All the music comes from records, but we reworked the sounds; everything in the recording studio." Asked how he feels about the issue of copyright, he replies, "I respect the notion of intellectual property, but I don't consider that I am stealing from anyone. I use recorded music in such a way that it really becomes my own music. Sometimes there may be quotes that people might recognize, but I find that perfectly acceptable, because we hear recorded music everywhere, it is imposed on us, and so in a sense it is part of the public domain."

Marclay hasn't only turned the record and the turntable into instruments in their own right. He has also developed playing techniques for these new instruments and refined them over the years. "Nowadays I must improvise a lot more," he says. "I used to compose pieces and rehearse them, I would number the records and go through a routine and I don't do that any more. These days, I just select records, I think about what I can do with them, and then in the context of the performance I just dive into it. The music really drives you to create, and one thing leads to another. That's why I like to improvise with other people, because they'll force you to go in directions that you wouldn't by yourself. I also try to stay away from loops. So many people use loops. I like to use as many techniques as possible, and the loop is just one of them. It's a skipping record, it's basic record vocabulary."

Today however, the approaching obsolescence of his chosen medium, vinyl, has reduced the confrontational element of his art. "My work had a different impact in the 80s," he confesses, "when people still listened to records. Then they could really relate to it, but now some people might come to my concerts where they never had a chance to listen to records, and for them it's a totally different experience. Records are not the standard means of distribution today, so outside the DJ culture they are nostalgic and old-fashioned." But then, Marclay's work has always been for more than just a critique of the record industry. "I think there is space for it in what I do, but there is also the desire to make pieces that move me and that have a poetic and humorous dimension."

The reason Marclay remains loyal to vinyl is because CDs are pretty much impervious to his manipulations. Then again, the emergence of the Internet and the new digital communications technologies could soon render CDs obsolete. Yet he welcomes these developments for, as he points out, music lost its immaterial dimension once the means to record it became available. "What I find interesting about this development is that it gives music back its freedom," he concludes. "All of a sudden it is detached from its fetishist medium, whether the record or the cassette, and so it has an immaterial quality. And that is the very essence of music." □





"When I mention 'multimedia' in the 'Rich Countries,' says Indonesian artist Heri Dono, 'it always means anything with computerised or digital technologies. But in the Third World it's connected with

recycling materials, like an old chime alarm clock or electric fans, motors from tape machine or computers, a container for crackers, toy boats from Coke cans."

Part of the Pacific State belt of rapidly technologised economies whose lightning expansions, with their attendant hybridisation of culture and gaping disjunctions between social strata (rich/poor, young/old, digital/mechanical, tradition), Indonesia provides staple fodder for seekers of contemporary exotica. Born in 1960 and currently resident in the city of Yogyakarta, Heri Dono evades all pigeonholes with his fascinating puppet plays and junkyard installations. His art exists in spite of official sanctions: when President Sukarno, founder of the Indonesian Republic, was deposed by President Suharto in 1966, power devolved to a military regime whose cultural department encourages the promotion of traditional arts over more radical forms. Yet such official decrees barely mask activities at ground level, just as the policy that every household must plant a tree outside the home cannot conceal the devastatingly

# moving

Fusing traditional musics and puppet displays, **Heri Dono's** extraordinary installations and sculptures satirise the trashed landscape of Indonesia. Words: Rob Young

smoaggy results of massive deforestation policies elsewhere in the land.

Educated at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, the cultural climate encouraged respect for Asian traditional forms such as painting, sculpture and the shadow-puppet technique of wayang. "Three months before I graduated I dropped out," recalls Dono. "In the 1980s I made some experimental art — in 1984 I did an installation where I filled an aquarium container full of water and some electronic kinetic objects moved by electric water pumps. I did some research into cartoon animation and I combined that with the animism religion. They are almost the same thing — one is more about technologies, the other more about spirituality."

Animism — the belief that non-living objects are imbued with a living spirit — is the key to conceiving puppetry and automated musics. Dono's kinetic installations refer to both wayang and gamelan, that Indonesian music which turns an orchestra of percussionists into a rhythmic machine. The title of his *Gamelan Of Noncommunication*, exhibited in 1997 at the

**Heri Dono's *Blooming In Arms*  
Oxford MoMA, 1995**



Tokyo ICC Centre, punned on the Japanese word 'nomi' (drink), as its endlessly tumbling liquids triggered a variety of mechanisms, it recalled Asian societies' alcohol rituals for unlocking perceptual doors. "The connection between 'drink' and 'communication' is the drinking ceremonies as the gate to open the mind by communicating with another culture. In most Asian Countries they have tea ceremonies, in other countries they have wine."

He has also collaborated with Australian New Music group The Bison Ensemble. "The Queensland Art Gallery introduced us. That was an interaction between the visual matters and the sounds. Nowadays, we keep strict boundaries around the various disciplines of art such as dance, music, theatre, and visual art. It's important to remember that in the past, art wasn't so drastically separate or compartmentalised. When we use Western musical instruments, we don't intend to marry them to local instruments, we just want them to play together without questioning the problem of diatonic and pentatonic scales."

For his installation *Blooming In Arms*, shown in Oxford in 1995, Dono raided a local hospital for prosthetic limbs to make a haunting point about the exploitation — both politically/militarily and ecologically — of Indonesia's rural society. At the same time, Dono's vision stretches far above the materiality of his constructions to express a transcendental Asian concept. "Wing is the concept of clarity and purity, where anything that is placed in the macrocosmos will return to the universe. The concept of gamelan music is more about the sense of atmospheres of feeling in the heart and brain, as well as our body senses. The space matters more than the objects."

Dono continues to exhibit work internationally, where he can speak with less restrictions than at home. "Well, yes, it is difficult to be a creatively free artist in Indonesia at the moment," he concludes. "A few years ago, before Suharto resigned, every exhibition or performance had to get permission in 11 offices to get the stamps, and sometimes a few hours before the opening they banned the exhibition anyway. Right now it is a little bit better in the gate of democracy."



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LES AMANTS DU PONT NEUF

GUILAUME DEPARDIEU

KATERINA GOLUBEVA

CATHERINE DENEUVE  
IN THE ROLE OF MARIE

A FILM BY LEOS CARAX

MUSIC BY SCOTT WALKER



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Montreal group **Godspeed You Black Emperor!** are the reluctant heroes of avant rock, whose electric elegies and vaulting idealism seem perpetually at odds with the world. David Keenan meets them on their European tour for an unprecedented face to face interview. Photography: Eva Vermandel

# life stinks



*Like... we all stop paying rent tomorrow and have a meeting somewhere... all the millions of us who lose everyday and know that things are fucked and know that we're fucked and that mostly we're powerless to change it. We stop paying rent tomorrow and sit down and figure out what the fuck a little. Let's do that... let's not talk about rock music anymore, let's ease up on the careless adjectives a little bit, let's fuck the rent and have ourselves a little meeting about the state of things finally... and let's stop talking about the millennium. THE END OF THE WORLD WILL NEVER FUCKING COME*

Love, Godspeed You Mahead! Emperor! 21/6/99

Nine months after the above missive landed on my desktop, Godspeed You Black Emperor! and I finally got to hold our first meeting in a grim bunker beneath the Garage, the Glasgow rock venue where they are due to perform as part of the British leg of their spring European tour. Seven of the group's nine members sprawl over couches in various stages of exhaustion as I fidget with my recorder, very much aware that tonight, I'm the asshole, the latest in a line of media representatives ready (somehow, God knows) to birth a whole new movement or scene with a deft flick of the wrist, here to reduce the many voices of Godspeed You Black Emperor! to a series of glib soundbites. In the space of a year the Godspeed orchestra — nine players in all, combining epic, weeping strings, rugged guitar trekking, propulsive dynamics and eschatological tape loops — has been dragged kicking and screaming from their Montreal commune into the pages of any magazine desperate to weave the world-weary boom of Godspeed's debut long player *Melodrama* into its own gloomy, attention-grabbing pre-millennial predictions. Meanwhile, the artists' reluctance to play the media game has only served to heighten the mystery shrouding this group of disenfranchised Canadian outsiders, who have since gone forth





Godspeed You Black  
Emperors at London Royal  
Festival Hall, April 2000

Below far left to right:  
Dave Bryant (hat), bassist  
Roger (clean shaven), Elrim  
(bearded)



Controlled anarchy (clockwise from below): drummer Alder; cellist Morsola with guitarist Roger; violinist Sophie; Morsola with bass player Thierry and member of Fly Pan Am; unnamed second bassist; Brian with drummer Bruce



and multiplied into an indeterminate number of similarly militant Montreal groups, many of them sharing the same vision and often the same personnel as Godspeed. Their names — A Silver Mount Zion, Fly Pan Am, Do Make Say Think — and titles ("Blown Out, Joy From Heaven's Merciful Hole," "Dead Flag Blues") read like hermetic codes, and discovering them feels like an initiation into the mysteries. For all the group's press exposure, however, the doomed Lee Marin-like drawl opening *It's Off* has lost none of its emotive power. "The car's on fire and there's no driver at the wheel and the sewers are all muddled with a thousand lonely suicides and a dark wind blows."

I first made contact with Godspeed back in August 1998, and since then I've received intermittent mails, rants and manifestos, most of which, while uniformly articulate and poetic, rarely touched on music. Instead they were filled with self-doubt and self-loathing, obsessing over the repercussions of their inexplicable rise to prominence (from small rock tois to a sold-out Royal Festival Hall show in 18 months). They're genuinely baffled about all the media fuss they've generated, especially as they feel that almost all of it has left them burned and bummed by several journalists and publications. Consequently they're ultra-guarded in interviews — when they give them at all. Tonight's Glasgow visit affords us our first face-to-face meeting. With seven members present it makes for a tough conversation. The hydra-headed Godspeed represents such a wide variety of opinion and political persuasion that virtually every statement is echoed or prefaced with the rejoinder that it's only "one person's opinion." While their commitment to running Godspeed as a co-operative is certainly admirable, it also serves occasionally to paralyse them. Every question is greeted with a thick wall of silent thought before being passed around the group, dissected and thrown limp back into my lap. At times I feel like I'm an extra in a scene from Ken Loach's wordy Spanish Civil War drama *Land and Freedom* — such is the level of debate over the slightest of semantics. Ultimately, however, it's totally endearing to witness a group wrestling with their conscience, completely unimpressed by the myriad "options" opened up to them by their newfound fame.

"I think the glory days are over," guitarist David Bryant asserts. "When we first started out, we pretty much knew everyone in the room. We knew why we were there and why they were there — you could talk to them afterwards and they told you why. Now we play in front of 700 people — they leave, you don't talk to anyone. It's more and more fucking alienating every time we come over here and it's less satisfying on a certain level. Not musically obviously we would have stopped doing it if we weren't interested in doing the music we do, but on the level of having communication with the people you're playing to — this presence in front of you that doesn't respond other than 'Woo!'"

"There's barricades in front of the stage tonight — that's a fine example of lack of contact," interrupts cellist Norsola. "That's really like 'rock show.'" Well, it's not too late, cuts in guitarist Elhm, rounding on both "I always thought that if we got to that stage we were going to find out ways to fuck with the space we play in. If this is the reality that we're in now — we're playing to 700 people and 75 per cent of them don't know why they're here, miss the context completely, just getting off on some other level — there must be some way to fuck with that. Call it a power or whatever, there must be something you can do to fuck with that and I'm hoping that if we're going to continue to play shows on this level — which I don't know, I'm not into

doing that — I think that we've got to figure out a way to change what we're doing. These places are completely rigid — the dynamic is just stuck into every surface of the room, into everything — the walls are angled and everything is laid out so that there's a smooth flow of people to the bar. It's like scientists map it out — a little room for people to consume in and then to get the fuck out of as quickly as possible. The economics are set up so that everybody gets fucked, meanwhile the band is in this little picture frame with the speakers and everything." He trails off. "With the brevities above us pulling our strings," deadpans percussionist Adan.

"But the point is, we don't have to do this," Elhm retorts. "We could play somewhere else to, like, 200 people — the point is, again, we do a shitty-assed job. Sure, we can make excuses. Yeah, we want a place with a big stage, a PA that's loud enough to handle what we do, yeah, you don't find that stuff regularly in some idealised, glorious place that we're talking about playing in. Those spaces have to be built, but they're not going to be built. So we fuck up — it's our fault, it's our fault, we fuck up — we came over here, we're here, we're dealing with it but nobody made us

do this. It's all our fault. I don't think we have a fucking clue. I mean, it's a real simple story. It's a bunch of people in Montreal who started playing in a band and then all of a sudden they had to deal with some things which they didn't know how to deal with and maybe that story's got some value — I don't think it's got enormous value. I don't think it'll have much value in ten years time but right now maybe it's vaguely interesting."

I went like this in 1994 Elhm and his friends Mauro and Moya were offered a gig supporting another local group, Steak 72. Rehearsals only

began a week before the show. "We figured the easiest thing to do would be to play one note for half an hour," Elhm explains. "I think that's how the long thing started, the idea of having long pieces and also the thing of playing in the dark and sitting down — some of the more superficial elements." As a duo, Elhm and Mauro had already recorded *All Lights Fucked On The Hairy Amp Drooping*, a cassette album in a ridiculous run of 33, when they heard a rumour that some people were looking to start up a new performance space. "We called up these guys, Don and Ian, about the possibility of playing at this space they were setting up but it ended up that they didn't get the space — they started a label instead."

"These guys," Don Wilkie and Ian Lavsky, inaugurated their new Constellation label with the appropriately titled "New Era Building" 7" and the Grey CD, both by Montreal quartet Sofa. As an opening statement of intent, it's beautifully precise — Sofa take the physical punch, the mainline jamming and dweebdom prouettes of

SST-era hardcore and explode it with melancholic moodswings. In the meantime Godspeed had started work on their towering vinyl debut, *It's Off*, which they originally planned to release themselves as a double 7" set. Invited in to help ride the faders during the recording session, Lavsky and Wilkie offered to put it out as the third Constellation release.

By now Montreal's music community was on the upsurge: A beanie quintet called Sackville, who marry fairly generic post-rock moves with a disturbed folk sensibility on their Constellation disc *The Principles Of Science*, had already been playing out before Godspeed's inception, but after 94 the floodgates really opened. Adan was playing in Exhaust, a unit fuelled by motorik clang and spaced tapes, before Godspeed stole him and Roger, of Fly Pan Am (who in turn intermittently played host



**"Sometimes we have shows where the only good thing you could get out of it is seeing a bunch of people unhappy in a cage"**

to Godspeed cellist Nonsola and notorious sound sculptor Alexandre St-Onge. "I think that in the last three years there's been three or four different groups of people making spaces for people to play what they want to play," Elrim explains. "I think that plays some part in it — you end up with a real supportive, small — uh, that's a cliché," he trails off. "What I'm trying to say is that there's a lot of stuff going on that got people listening to what everyone else was doing — it's about as difficult to get gigs in Montreal as it is in a lot of medium to large size cities in North America and Europe. There's a few shitty rock clubs — not as many as other large cities, but at the same time rent is cheap — it's cheap to live there. There's a drifting population of people who only stick around for two or three years and a lot of people who are there to try to involve themselves in building something, so you end up with a lot of people willing to put energy into putting on smaller shows in smaller spaces that aren't rock clubs."

"The fact that there's a lot of disused industrial space helps, too," continues Aidan. "A lot of lofts you can rent for pretty cheap — people can rent a loft and live there and have parties and have their friends' bands play there." Bruce talks of a "quiet revolution" that has taken place in Montreal over the last decade, caused by an exodus of many English-speaking residents, unhappily with the increasing dominance

been interested in hardcore — well, that weird period between hardcore and what's now called indie rock — that period of five years where those two things met. I don't know what you would call that, but there was tons of shit going on all the time. Black Flag is certainly part of it but that's been sort of tainted by Henry Rollins and what he's gotten up to since then."

Godspeed's self-image is a world away from the press perception of them. Though they're often depicted as spearheading some vague, anti-rock avant-consumism, they see themselves as resolutely "in the tradition." From groups like Black Flag and The Minutemen they've taken the whole work ethic, the "serious as your life" drive that sent Henry Rollins and co across the States in the back of a van, rehearsing on their nights off and sleeping on floors. They also share their forefathers' fiercely independent spirit — the feeling that this music belongs to "us" and should be protected from corrupting, diluting, undeserving influences at all costs. Of course Godspeed rock (note for English readers: this is nothing to be scared of) — three loud guitars, two loud basses, two drummers — they understand the beauty of volume and power; that rock is most powerful when its trajectory isn't fixed, when it simply GOES. All that matters is the amount of revs you give it and the size of your runway. On a



of French-Canadian culture, where an inability to speak French has become a definite handicap to your employment prospects. But then, Montreal has developed from a small 17th century French colony into one of the largest French-speaking cities in the world. As its downtown industrial areas became rundown and abandoned, musicians, artists and film makers moved into their large, cheap spaces. "Montreal is a weird city," says Elrim. "It's really liberal about some things and really not about others — the police, for instance, are completely out of control." "I mean you won't get hassled for jaywalking," Aidan adds. "But if you're a black man you're more likely to get shot in the back."

**A**s more people got involved in Godspeed, it became a bit more interesting," says Elrim, picking up the trail of the group's genesis. "We're at a hard point in trying to figure out what we're doing next because we don't want to be one-trick ponies, and I think that the moment you start questioning what you're going to do next, things get confusing. We're certainly at a confusing place right now. At the beginning it was more conscious — in terms of it being a collective, of being kind of loose, of writing long pieces. In terms of having this sort of instrumentation, in terms of not having a singer, in terms of using tape loops, in terms of backing films — in terms of utilising a certain visual aesthetic — there was consciousness there, but I think what's good about Godspeed doesn't have very much to do with any of those elements — everyone in this band has done a good job of working within it. Before Godspeed a lot of us had

good night, when Godspeed are wound up, their peaks are at once stellar and primitively satisfying on a real gussy level. However, as with all real-time group efforts, they have as many off-nights as on, and when they fail to achieve lift-off they come over bored, like they're just ploughing through the same routine one more time. Their debut London gig at the Garage in 98 was a case in point — but even by that time, the buzz was such that they only had to show up to send the attendant sheep into paroxysms of puzzled ecstasy.

*Sometimes the shows are overwhelming, with the six-foot stage and the disorientalizing audiences. You start the whole rock music process with a healthy distrust of the control and you get hypersensitive to your own role in the awkk, ridiculous pagen but we are always in the process of figuring out what the fuck and sometimes it is a good thing to fork over yr money to witness it maybe? Other nights you are just some minor version of U2ucking 2 with the squat black wedge monitors glaring at you like an accusation or a banner and you'd rather be at home petting yr cat and feeling sorry for yourself. And sometimes the venues are like death-camps, and you picture yourself stuck there in the audience, feeling only half-drunk, speed off and hateful, and you can't stop fixating on bad memories of no-off evenings spent watching some paled warrior postures screaming 'ME! ME! ME!' And the passwater in the plastic cup going warm between your fingers. What do you do to change that? What can we do not to contribute to that? What can you do not to contribute to this whole state of*



affairs? Musicians, critics, bar owners, bookers, etc. we're all guilty, we're all cowards.  
weeklings, lars mostly We got excuses and rationalisations and justifications but  
we're all basically lame 21/6/99

"Sometimes we have shows where I think the only good thing you could get out of it is seeing a bunch of people who are unhappy being in a cage," Efrim sighs. "Like a bunch of sick monkeys — sometimes it's like that and maybe at the very best it's all we can do. It's just an example of people trying to deal with this shit — maybe there's something else but I don't think we've figured out that something else."

"The thing is, the more we go along, the more we compromise," blurts David. "I think we just completely change the rules as this way things keep getting bigger." "It's all part of the way this system works," Adan agrees. "There are things that are nice about it — I got to go to the dentist for the first time in ten years. I got to buy a new pair of shoes. I can pay off some of my student loan."

I make the inevitable point that they are all far too hard on themselves, whipping themselves for the slightest infringement of their ultra-strict code of ethics. I mean, isn't it important and exciting that a group like Godspeed are in the limelight at all? A

cars going by and all you're trying to scream is 'What the fuck?' There are nine people in this band, so if you end up with seven of them in a room everything gets reduced. No one can say anything because there's a lot of difference of opinion here and between ourselves we're too chicken-shit to hammer out that shit. — right? Maybe that would be valuable — to hammer out that shit between ourselves and let someone document that — maybe that would make sense. — here you're just scratching the surface."

"We've yet to elect our minister of culture," Adan gapes. "What should come out of this is that we're a bunch of — uh — just trying our best." "You see now we're talking about the process instead of just letting it happen," despairs Efrim, shaking his head. "There's no good way to get anything across or to walk away with anything good from 99 per cent of the magazines that are out there — it's impossible, like getting across to people who believe that Budweiser commercials can have some kind of value as art. You can't do it, so it doesn't happen — especially if you're just this little weed-ass page in the middle of one of these magazines and we're like, 'We don't know what we're doing and this is all fucked,' and you're between an ad and an interview with I don't know who. Some other fuckin' band who are talking about how they got a record coming out in the spring and they're just 'doing it for the kids' or some waning of that."

But surely their suspicious attitude towards the media, their mysterious photos and reluctance to talk make it easier to cast the group as a gimmick or to caricature them as "that weird group." You get the drift: they're so awkward, just grumpy guys playing music. Efrim laughs. "Yeah — it's just like being in high school again and everything that's going on all around you is all fuck-wads who think that you're a complete fucking jerk-off or whatever, that you and all your friends are freaks. Why would you worry? Do you know what I'm saying? Maybe every now and then you'll corner someone like the prom queen when she's drunk and she'll confess some dark secrets to you and you'll think that that makes some kind of sense, but the next day everything's back to normal — it just never ends. You never leave high school — we're still there."

"Do you know what I really think?" he blurts, "my own opinion? I think time is running short. I think time is running short. I think there are forces of evil in the world. I think that global capitalism is just, like, one inch away from being everywhere. I think now is not the time to be frittering away playing in a silly-assed post-rock band. I think everything you do in the face of this is inadequate." Everything? "Yeah!" he exclaims. "Which is good. It's all good, it's good to make feeble attempts, right? I think that's what they are. It's like throwing yourself up against a big fucking wall and the wall is just getting bigger and bigger." You really think it's as hopeless as that? "That's not hopeless!" he shouts. "It's beautiful. It's beautiful that people try to do it. It's beautiful that people exist." Such romantic pessimism haunts the works of Godspeed. Their art is essentially tragic in the sense that Schopenhauer described in *The World As Will And Representation*. "What gives all that is tragic, whatever its form, a characteristic of the sublime, is the first inkling of the knowledge that the world and life can give no satisfaction, and are not worth our investment in them. The tragic spirit consists in this. Accordingly it leads to resignation." Or to quote Efrim's other group A Silver Mount Zion: "The world is sick/SICK, so kiss me quick." They may be elegising a dead flag, but essentially they're still singing the blues.

I ask Efrim if he thinks creating art in the face of the inevitable is a concert, some sort of indulgence? He nods. "I think believing that the creation of art alone is going to lead to any sort of solution is a concert, yes. Placing that as some kind of resistance in the year 2000 in the Western world is a concert, yes." But don't people need access to alternative sources of information? "Sure they do," Bruce agrees, "but what sort of alternative information are we offering?" Well, now's your chance. "You tell me. 'Well, we can't talk about actual issues, no one agrees on anything. We can't perform that task — we couldn't. That's part of the problem you see?'"

"Can I just say something?" pleads Efrim, eager to clarify his point just as the final drones of Fly Pan Am's set signals the end of the interview. "I wasn't describing a hopeless situation at all. I think it's good that people do that. When I'm saying that these are feeble acts, I'm not saying that they're all gonna fucking die tomorrow. I'm just saying — I know there's stuff like direct action but that's not what we're doing. We're on a six-foot stage going 'Wah wah wah!'"




group that can actually instigate some debate, promote news that aren't often heard in the mainstream? A chance encounter with their music could alter the direction of someone's life.

Efrim nods, then shrugs his shoulders. "I swear to God there was some point maybe two years ago before all this shit started there would be shows in spaces we liked in Montreal where it wasn't great — it wasn't like everything had come true, but there was, like, a glimmer. A little window would open a millimetre, you know? And it was enough — you'd lie in bed and you'd be hammered and you'd think that little window is going to open a bit more and a bit more — something that you can't define. You can't name it. Something that would mean that life wasn't shit. I don't even see that glimmer in the space between the window and the window frame anymore — you don't get that glimpse. I don't know if that makes any sense. It's important to question these things and if you question them then you end up bringing up all the down points, right? So then you end up — 'Jeez! And you feel like you're in high school again going, 'Life sucks, man? Do you understand what I'm saying?' If you're actually asking these things, trying to figure this shit out, then these are the points you're going to bring up. What's wrong? You're not going to bring up what's good. We know what's good about where we're at — it's just not enough and the next step is scary 'Cause it's like — what is the next thing?'"

"The next thing is to stop lighting so much," Adan cracks. But Efrim continues, unfazed. "It's like screaming through traffic, like there's someone across the street and all these

# invisible jukebox



Every month we play a musician a series of records which they're asked to identify and comment on — with no prior knowledge of what they're about to hear. This month it's the turn of...

## Evan Parker

Tested by Mike Barnes

A genuine pillar of the international free music scene, saxophonist Evan Parker's first attempt at improvisation came about when he provided music for a student film based on Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* at the Royal College of Art. At the degree show, Parker met the influential drummer John Stevens, and between 1967–69 the pair played together in Spontaneous Music Ensemble, releasing the classic *Kayoban* on Island in 1968. That same year, Parker featured with Peter Brötzmann's Octet on the seminal scream-up *Machine Gun*.

From the late 60s on, Parker began connecting with the free players that would sustain him throughout his long career, in The Tony Oxley Sextet, Music Improvisation Company, Alex Schlippenbach's small groups and The Globe Unity Orchestra. After

co-founding Incus Records with Oxley and joining Derek Bailey in the early 70s, his better known projects have included Chris McGregor's Brotherhood Of Breath; a horn/percussion duo with Paul Lytton; and the long-standing trio with Lytton and Barry Guy. Meanwhile, his ongoing solo recordings such as *Saxophone Solos* (1975) and *Process And Reality* (1991) breathed new life into the lone improv sax, highlighting his phenomenal circular breathing virtuosity, and extension of the instrument's range into microtones, overtones and percussive tongue-flutters.

Parker continues to perform internationally and appear on a prolific number of CDs. Recently he has been collaborating with electronic improvisors such as George Lewis, Walter Prati and Lawrence Casserley. The Jukebox took place in London.



**JOHN SURMAN**  
**"Promention" from How**  
**Many Clouds Can You See?**  
**(Dorain)**

[Dorain asks for the music to be turned up and then sits with his eyes closed for ten minutes] I don't have

this record, but I think I know a lot of these people quite well. It might be a John Surman record from maybe the late 60s or the early 70s?

**Yes, it was released in 1970.**

I think I'm hearing John Surman, on baritone to begin with and soprano at the end. And two drummers. I'm guessing one of them is Stu Martin. I'm not sure who the other one is. I think I'm hearing two trumpet players in the ensemble. I haven't heard Kenny [Wheeler] solo, but I think he might be in the ensemble. Harry Beckett I think that was Alan Skidmore on the tenor solo. [Pained] John Taylor, I'm pretty sure. I'm not sure who's on bass. It would be a guess to say Malcolm Griffiths on trombone, but it would be an educated guess. Is that roughly right?

**Pretty close. There's only one drummer, Tony Oxley.**

**Kenny Wheeler's not in it; otherwise you're right. The bass player is someone you've played with, Barre Phillips.**

[Looks at sleeve] Oxley sounds great. I must say Fantastic. I could have imagined two drummers there at times. It was very strong.

**We were wondering why you weren't on it yourself.**

Why wasn't I on it? I think John and I have always had slightly different paths. That goes back even before this. I certainly never expected to be on the record. There were strong connections between Ossie [Mike Osbourne], John and Skid. They did most things together. So if he wanted a tenor player he took Skid and that's quite right as well. If he wanted a soprano player, he had himself. We have over the years done the occasional thing, but pretty infrequently. I can't think of more than about two or three gigs that we've been on together.

**Some of these musicians are South African, and played with the Chris McGregor Brotherhood Of Breath also in the early 70s, with whom you are also associated.**

Thinking about it, I did a week or ten days at Ronnie Scott's with Chris, and I think John was in that band. That's the closest we came to being in a band together and we did some things with Chris before the Brotherhood started. So all of these things go back to the scene around the old place, and two thirds of my activities were more at the Little Theatre Club [with Spontaneous Music Ensemble].

**Did you enjoy being part of a large ensemble that played a mixture of composed and free music?**

[Laughs] Well, Brotherhood was a particular case of that, because there were so many different points of view at any one point about where the music should go next, including which tune we should play next and whether or not we should play a tune next or shall there now be a free interlude? You often had many

different propositions being dealt with simultaneously. So it was quite close to chaos, but it was a very 'up' sort of chaos, very positive, and I think the spirit was more important than the details. It was usually after the record had been made, the arrangements gradually dissolved into the maelstrom, into that all-devouring maelstrom. Yeah, great. Next!

**POLWECHSEL**

**"Hyogo" from Polwechsel 2 (hat[now]ART)**

[After 20 seconds of near silence] I might have to get a bit closer to the speakers [Saxophone comes in] Is that John Butcher?

**Yes.**

Polwechsel? Well, I wish I knew more about Polwechsel and [trombones] Radu Mafait. Obviously I'm aware that Radu has a kind of new approach to improvising. When things are played this quietly you get all kinds of distortion effects, especially when you turn the things up louder to hear it. This is by no means the quietest record I've heard. There's a Radu Mafait record where you really have to struggle to distinguish the music signal from the noise of the system.

I'm more familiar with the idea that the activity generates a feedback and that it's not constrained by particular pre-given doctrines, but that it can simply go where it goes. I'm not always sure that this new school of improvising is really interested in that aspect of improvisation. Or, in fact, if they are interested in improvisation at all it's quite interesting, because obviously I've known Radu a long time and watched his music change from a rather exuberant, post-Roswell Rudd trombone player with The Brotherhood Of Breath to this ultra-punk [form of improvisation] where all that's left is the gesture of no gesture.

[When] John Butcher [plays] with Polwechsel, it becomes slightly different. This becomes more an improvisation of micro-structure and granularity, almost like molecular recombination, chemical improvisation. I find this very interesting, but by turning it up as loud as we've turned it up, whether we're actually listening to it as it was intended to be listened to, I've got no idea. It raises some interesting questions. There are many people that use improvisation but still impose a particular view on the outcome. I would say my solo music does that. It's improvisation in a very deliberately chosen set of limitations.

**In recent years you have become more interested in processing, overdubbing and electronics. What drew you to that area?**

You meet particular people, in my case the key people would have been Walter Pratt and, later on, Lawrence Cessley and Joel Ryan. They are all very interesting people and it happens that they work with interesting musicians and they work with processing. It became clear to me that this is a new instrument on the scene, or many different versions of new instruments. Also the studio technology of multitrack recording and digital signal processing, all these things have become much more affordable than they used to be, more transportable, much more robust, so it's practical to

think of making records that way and giving concerts that way.

**When you let someone else process your sound, you're suddenly relinquishing control of the end product...**

Of course, but as soon as you work in a collective improvising situation, you're letting go, by definition. You're never going to have complete control in that situation and even when you have so-called complete control—in my case that would be acoustic solo playing—some of the most interesting things happen when you lose control for a moment. So I like controlled control. And very often, people who have problems with giving their sound into a collective situation, where some of the other musicians are taking that sound and modifying it, it's precisely that inability to dissociate themselves from the result that the other person produces. When I listen to Walter or Lawrence or Joel Ryan working with my stuff, I listen to them. I'm hearing back stuff. I can't hear any other way. For me it's very interesting.



**DIONNE WARWICK**

**"Promises, Promises"**  
**from Dionne Warwick**  
**Sings The Bacharach And**  
**David Songbook (Music**  
**Club International)**

Aha! Yeah! Well, I don't

need to listen to this. I can speak in general about Dionne Warwick and Burt Bacharach. How long do you want me to speak for? Three or four hours? This is not one of my favourites, it's a pretty nice tune. I tend to like the more obscure things like "Here I Am" and "Hasbrock Heights".

**What do you like about this?**

Well, first of all Dionne's voice, especially in this period, was just an amazing instrument. Bacharach was a very inventive arranger, very interesting, the way he sets the text, the way he uses these broken or compound rhythms and allows the line to flow really nicely, makes for a really natural song. And Hal David's lyrics very often have something interesting happening and I think he doesn't quite get the attention that he deserves. [Bacharach] always had a way of finding an instrument you would not associate—the case of the flugelhorn, he turned it into something of a cliché. Ukuleles and all those strange cheap electric guitar effects. All kinds of stuff that you'd think wouldn't work but became completely part of your feeling for the song. Something that on its own is almost too cheap to be worth considering, suddenly becomes the focus of the whole arrangement.

**Have you ever written any songs?**

A long time ago I wrote one or two, yeah. I went to Denmark with John Stevens to further our careers as free improvisers. I didn't work out tremendously well, but there was a lot of spare time. The singer Peter Sarsfeld lived in the same block of flats, and we wrote a song together which we hoped Dusty Springfield would record. My main hope was pinned on that but it came

## invisible jukebox

to nothing. It's a shame I had to struggle on with the improvising and everything.

**What happened when you went to record with Scott Walker on *Climats Of Matter*?**

[Laughs] Well, you know the way Scott makes a record. No one ever hears the songs, he puts the vocal on last and there are no pilot vocals. So I played with a pilot synthesizer track which is not on the finished record. There's nothing in the usual way of information, but his stuff's great. I think, tremendous.

I met Scott, and we spent a tremendous afternoon together and we drank several bottles of Chablis, at room temperature, which I thought was an interesting touch. A very nice man, I wish that I knew him better, but I think many people would say that. He's a very private man, so I was lucky to spend that afternoon and evening with him. So if he should see this 'Hi, Scott'!



### SONIC YOUTH/ CHRISTIAN WOLFF

**Burdocks** from *Goodbye 20th Century* (SYR)  
Well, this sounds like a violinist who's working with sampling.

**Actually, I think it's mostly guitars and he all played live. I don't know what this is.**

**It's a Christian Wolff piece, *Burdocks*, performed by Sonic Youth. It was originally composed for 'one or more orchestral groups' from 1970.**

It's strange that it makes you think of sampling. I remember a performance of *Burdocks*, organized I think by Cornelius Cardew in [North London's] Roundhouse sometime in the early '70s. That post-Cagean thinking about how to write for people which just encourages certain kinds of social interactions. Cardew was very concerned with those issues at that time. You can hear that there is a very ordered system of interactions to a point and then some of the choices of sound resources are confusing that a little bit, some of the more electronic stuff.

**It was originally scored for 'one or more orchestras'.**

**What was the instrumentation when you saw it performed?**

I could be wrong, but I think it was The Scratch Orchestra, so there were a range of... some of those people weren't really instrumentalists, some were very skillful instrumentalists. [Looks at sleeve] This is an interesting selection, nice that they included this Nicolas Slonimsky piece [*Piece Enfantine*] and also that they've got some Cardew here.

**It's pretty remarkable for a major label rock group to be tackling this kind of material.**

[Laughs] Well, yeah. Thurston [Moore] has always been interested in other stuff, before they were popular, and now they are popular it gives him an opportunity to encourage other people to take a look at more obscure music forms. He's very conscious of his role in that way and really does his best to introduce the younger audience that are interested in Sonic Youth to the

context he feels is important to him, where he comes from, where that music comes from. Probably doesn't make you that popular with the record company, though.

**How did you get to play with him and Walter Prati recently on *The Promise* CD?**

When I first met Thurston, Sonic Youth weren't particularly known. He was interested in free jazz and free improvisation then, and he's continued to be interested. This particular idea, I think he asked me to do something at the Jazz Cafe and I couldn't do it, but he had sent me some of the Ecstatic Peace! records and we were in loose contact. I don't know where Walter came upon the idea that it would make an interesting record, but it did and Thurston went for it. It wasn't laboured over, I think we spent one or two afternoons in the studio and then Walter took the stuff home and worked on it in ProTools for a bit... he's got an extensive studio facility in Milan.

**What do you think of Sonic Youth's music?**

I don't know much about it. I met Thurston Moore and Kim [Gordon] when they came to a very unusual event when Elton Dean was doing something round the corner from the Vortex in [North London's] Stoke Newington High Street. He used to use a pub called Rumours, so it was called Jazz at Rumours, an upstairs room. He had an all-day festival one time, and I played one of the last things I did with John Stevens. We had a duo there in the afternoon, and Thurston and Kim were just taking the opportunity to check out the scene. That's quite a long time ago. But I'm starting to lose my perspective on what's recent and what's less recent and whether it's reasonable to think about something that happened eight years ago is that recent or is that a long time ago?

### MAHMOUD ALI IBRAHIM

**"Babouari" from *Music In The World Of Islam: Reeds & Baggines/Drums & Rhythms* (Topic)**

Sounds like North African... I'm not sure if it's the Joujouka musicians.

**It's eastward from there.**

**So more Middle East. Where's it from?**

Syria... it's a traditional shepherd's song. The first part was played on a double clarinet, the second on a single reed instrument, although we aren't told exactly what by the sleeve notes.

**I've even got this. Not this CD, but the original boxes.**

**Did this sort of music have any influence on your techniques, your circular breathing for example?**

Well, it didn't really, no. It came from reading a magazine, I think it was called *Soundings*, and someone had written a piece for three soprano sax and sax. 'Circular breathing if possible' so I thought if they're going to start to ask for this kind of stuff, maybe I should look into the technique. The other incentive was playing with [guitarist] Derek Bailey and [sound sculptor/electronic manipulator] Hugh Davies. They were both experimenting with long feedback so it could sustain any note indefinitely, so it was sometimes a little frustrating to have to drop out of a chord or a

complex of sounds to stop for a breath.

**From a listener's point of view your solo circular breathing excursions sound pretty mind-boggling. What is it physically like to play in that style? Does it feel trance-like or hypnotic?**

No, I don't hyperventilate. I think what happens is you move from analytical thinking into a right-brain dominance where being analytical doesn't help. You can get lots more going on if you let yourself be carried into the music, carried by the music rather than thinking you're in control. The music takes over from you and leads you to places you wouldn't be able to get to if you were trying to take the lead. Sounds a bit mystical, but it has strange, unknown aspects for me.

**Have any particular types of indigenous music — like the track we have just listened to — influenced your technique?**

I did some recording with [drummer] Han Bennink last week — he stayed at my place and in the morning I played him some shamanic ceremonies from the eastern seaboard of Korea, and I'm sure we were influenced by that in the evening. But there are certain specific conscious references which are like codes between us. Then there may be other things just going in and it may be part of your view of what music can be, whether you want it or not. So absolutely, I still listen and add to obscure musics from endangered cultures. I'm not sure how much longer they'll be able to survive in their 'clear' state before they become taken up in some way. Taken-up stuff becomes interesting too, but in a different way. I like the music that is close to being unaffected by outside influences as possible.

One time I went into [London jazz record shop] Ray's and they said, 'Ah, we've found it. We found the record you got it from!' It was some Bulgarian bagpipe music. I wouldn't mind if it was true, but I didn't know the record. Ah, the explanation is it's a tube, it's got so many holes, you blow in it, you move your fingers in prescribed patterns, you follow your ear and that's what comes out.



### CAPTAIN BEEHART AND THE MAGIC BAND

**"Spitball Scalped Uh Baby" from *Grow Fins* (Revenant)**

I was going to say John Zorn and Milford Graves, but no. It's interesting. I like it, whatever it is.

**This isn't the sort of music you would immediately associate with this artist. It's a sax and drums duet from a 1972 concert.**

Is it La Monte Young? It thought it might be. I've got no idea who it is, then.

**It's Captain Beethart on the sax. He was quite candid about the fact that he never practised and had no idea about scales. But then he claimed it meant he could get sound out of the sax other people couldn't.**

Well, that's the most interesting Captain Beethart I've

ever heard, because generally I'm not a big fan. Which puts me at a distance from many people to whom he was a primary source of information, a revelation I suppose you'd have to call this post-Albert Ayler saxophone playing. This wasn't a new music in 1972, this was a very well understood approach to playing, maybe approximating something — whether they knew it or not — that existed elsewhere and already had a strong tradition. It sounds to me like they're playing with good feeling and good conviction.

Technique is being able to do what you want to do. If you don't want to play with technique, then you have the technique not to play with technique. That's perfect technique. So in the end you're left with the use which the technique is put to and that can be very interesting, even in the complete absence of technique.



#### DAVID S. WARE QUARTET

"Solar Passage" from  
*Cryptology* (Homestead)

Not so big on hi-fi today, are we? Well, it's probably Peter Brottmann? Charles Gayle? David S. Ware? Is this the

band with [pianist] Matthew Shipp? Yes, it's *The David S. Ware Quartet*. Do you like his work? I can't say I know a lot about David S. Ware. We probably just haven't played on the same festivals. I haven't had a chance to hear him live. That's the way I hear a lot of stuff these days, just by being on the same gig as somebody. I don't get a chance to listen to all the records.

We're not listening on a hi-fi set up here. I'm not making excuses, but it does tend to flatten out some of the crucial differences. The piano sounds like it's very much in the foreground and the sax sounds like it's in the next room. It's a bit hard to make detailed assessments, so it took me three. Sorry Peter, sorry Charles, sorry David. But loosely you could say they were all in that school of post-Albert Ayler players, although Peter always said he was playing like that before he heard Albert, and was so pleased when he heard him.

In *The Wire* 165, Jim O'Rourke made a comment about improvising in a group context: "I have no problem with the Evan Parker Trio. But they're not improvising. They're playing Evan Parker Trio music." Do you think it was fair comment? Should improvisers always "tear into the void"?

Well, there's leaping into the void and then there's high diving. If you're going to jump off a cliff, it's not going to last long and it's going to end messily. But if you want somebody who jumps at something to do with gravity, grace, jumping, dropping and landing, I would prefer to watch somebody high diving. I know that Jim got upset by some of the reactions to that. I even called him to ask him if he was happy with the way it came out. If I can say here, now, publicly, I give Jim the benefit of the doubt, and I'm sure that he's talking about something that distinguishes improvising groups with high levels of

experience and improvising groups with low levels of experience.

And my position on it is fairly simple — if practising alone helps you play better, why shouldn't practising together? I'm very interested in improvising, but I'm interested in improvising that's directed towards producing listenable, good music, not just some illustration of how well people improvise. If we're not working with the trio, with Barry [Guy] and Paul [Lyndon], I don't know what we are doing. It sounds tight because it's tight, not because we've worked on the details, but because we've worked on the understanding.

#### JOHN ZORN & FRED FRITH

"The Ladder" from *The Art Of Memory* (Incus)  
This has got to be John Zorn. Is this with Fred? Now this was within seconds, readers.

This is from *The Art Of Memory*.

I thought it was. This is on an obscure English label [Parker co-founded the Incus label with Derek Bailey]. An interesting career move for John and Fred. Yeah, very special articulation.

Are you a John Zorn fan?

I'm his original fan. I met John in '78 when I went to America and did a solo tour there. I was introduced, through [Emanem label boss] Martin Davidson, to a bunch of people including Donald Miller of Borbetomeus, and through Donald I met John, and went to one of his Theatre Of Musical Optics concerts where he didn't play anything. He manipulated objects and lights, there was no saxophone to be seen. Very interesting. John's always been radical. Whatever he does he does extremely and very interestingly. Those articulations, I don't know anybody else who's quite got that kind of stuff down and that strange ability to mix in references to other styles of music. It's a unique skill to be able to move around like that.

In many places they are playing in a fairly obvious tempo. If you are playing in free time, do you think of some pieces as "fast" or "slow", even though they have completely indeterminate speeds?

It's an interesting question, but it's not easy to answer. There are rates, I suppose you could call it. There's more to it than note densities, there's something more going on that determines the sense of speed. But it's not tempo, it's not metric, it's some equivalent of that tempo marking, the way it can go from extremely slow to extremely fast and all the shades in between, but it can do all that without ever being metric, which is very interesting. You can have a basically slow moving thing and you impose injections of fast moving stuff over that, but it can be the other way around and can be moving very fast and somehow you introduce an absolutely static element.

I've become obsessed with the idea of the importance of narrative as well as incident. Improvisation is weak when it's all incident and no narrative. One of the ways of generating the narrative is to sow the seeds of what's coming next inside where you are at any point — which has probably got a lot to do with good writing or good poetry. Any kind of art that wants to tell a complete

story when the piece is over must have the equivalent of that kind of technique going on.



#### TERRY RILEY

Extract from *Poopy Maynard And The Phantom Band All Night Flight Vol 1* (Organ Of Corti)

It must be Terry Riley. Is it one of those Organ Of Corti live things? He's clearly

improvising, but the way the system works, the way the [tape] delays build up and accumulate and decay gives a certain absolute, strong character to the final outcome. Which to some people means, if there's a clear methodology that leads to a clear outcome, he can't be improvising. But I quite like that focused soundworld — he's working very much with the interaction, the feedback between the sound of the soprano saxophone and the delay system, and that's what the music is about.

It's a precursor of the things that are possible now with digital sound processing — this was one of the key steps in that development of the saxophone and transformation. Here, of course, the transformation is in the time element, in the way the system overlaps and the way the sounds decay.

You come back to that thing that there are only so many keys on the instrument and fingers on your hand. There are only so many groups of four notes you can play with one hand, so of course you're dealing with repetition, but I take that as a given. The other question is why can you not improvise with repetition? Of course you can.

I've always wondered why it is that in the free improvising world, repetitive beats seem absolutely to be avoided. Shouldn't you be free to play rhythms in with?

The problem with tempo is with tempo comes metronomic, with metronomic comes metric structure, with metric structure comes a kind of fixed form. And with fixed form you really need theme and variations and other material. It's looser if you don't have that metronomic. It doesn't mean there can't be moments of that, or reference to it. But if you drop totally into rock, drumming of one kind or another, that's so full of resonances and references and you're in somebody else's territory at that point. So when you do hear free improvisers dropping into other domains, they often sound not very convincing. And that, for the most part is done out of a kind of insecurity. If you're dealing with people that are secure about what they do, they don't feel the need to do that kind of stuff. So, I think it means we have our own equivalents of slamming Evan Parker's *Participating* releases include *Alber Appleby* (Leo), *Two Chapters* And *An Epilogue* with John Tibary (Matchless), *The Two Seasons* with John Edwards and Mark Sanders (Emanem), *Swinging The Bam* with The Schippenbach Trio (PHR), and *The School Of Velocity* with Dave Tucker/John Edwards/Steve Noble (Ropatec). He also curates a festival in Glasgow this month. See Out There.

# sound check

Over the top: May's selected albums and 12" s

## THE NEW MUSIC

- **Anthology Of American Folk Music**  
Volume 4
  - Robert Ashley
  - Justin Bennett
  - Blonde Redhead
  - Bloodcount
  - Arthur Blythe Trio
  - John Cage
  - Uri Caine/La Gala Scienza
  - Cole/Conrad/MacLise/Young/Tazeola
  - Curt Duce
  - DAT Politics
  - Michael Finnissy
  - Fœhn
  - Grateful Dead
  - Charles Hayward
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  - Ich Schwitze Nie
  - Inceptor Orchestra
  - Ikra 1903
  - Jackie-O Motherfucker
  - Jazzkammer
  - Jeru The Damaja
  - Guy Klavovnik
  - Brandon LaBelle
  - Yo Yo Ma/Meyer/O'Connor
  - Maher Malal Hush Baz
  - Wim Mertens
  - Minutemen 2
  - Phil Minton Quartet
  - Tsiggi Muloz
  - Ohm: The Early Years Of Electronic Music 1948-80
  - Pablo's Child
  - Pan Sonic/Charmagne Palestine
  - Avo Part
  - Pole
  - Lou Reed
  - Marc Ribot & Los Cabanos Positivos
  - Terry Riley
  - Jeffery Roden
  - Steve Roden/In between noise
  - Rome — A Soundscape Remix
  - Rothko
  - Michael Rosenburg
  - Giacinto Scelsi
  - Richard Thomas
  - Tone Roc
  - Pika Valvio
  - Wdflowers
  - Davey Williams/Mush Right Thumb
- Plus new compilations, reissues, avant rock, classical, critical beats, dub, electronica, global, jazz and outier limits releases in brief

## Robert Ashley

**Dust**  
VIRVIR/DAK, 1999, 2x12

**Yo-Yo Ma/Edgar Meyer/Mark O'Connor**  
**Appalachian Journey**  
SONY CLASSICAL, 9856782 CD

## Operazone

**The Redemgn**  
KNITTING FACTORY/KPAG27 CD

When crossing the categorical border, closing the generic gap increasingly becomes an imperative rather than an option for serious music making. Robert Ashley has for decades straddled the boundary between untamed experimentation and kitsch rock sonarities. In the process he has released a series of ironic, convention-washing operas that locate him at the forefront of contemporary narrative art in any medium. The stories forming *Dust* reproduce the babble of the marginalised overheard on street corners and in the parks of an inhospitable city then channelled improbably into a smoothly layered form derived from the motifs of medieval Europe. The harrowing text is delivered with the relentlessness of genuine obsession, yet seemingly orchestrated. Ashley and his son Sam Tom Buckner, Joan La Barbara and Jacqueline Humbert are *Dust*'s speakers. Blue Gene Tyranny supplies lascivious synthesizer bass and Tom Hamilton mixes. Ashley devotees will know the score. Surprise comes with the second disc. Four sentimental country songs, harking the memory of a damaged war veteran. Ashley admires Daniel Lanois's explosive production work with Willie Nelson and Emmylou Harris. He also recognizes Hank Williams as a storyteller who "put the accents in the right places. In this context those accents have unsettlingly like dust suspended in the air.

By comparison, a trip up the Appalachian mountains with cellist Yo-Yo Ma, bassist Edgar Meyer and violinist Mark O'Connor seems perfectly straightforward. As on *Appalachian Journey* the trio's 1996 release, the application of fustian classical technique to homestead materials produces engaging results. Of course Aaron Copland had already strided the ground, and Frederick Delius before him. The folk resources of the region are rich enough to bear the weight of expectation which these virtuosos carry with them. Aaron Krauss sings sweetly on Stephen Foster's "Swanee My Darling". Less convincingly James Taylor guesses on Foster's "Hard Times Come Again

No More. It sounds especially palled when measured against Syd Straw's 1989 recording of the song, arranged superbly by Van Dyke Parks.

The French theologian Teilhard De Chardin suggestively remarked that everything that rises must converge. Descend, on the other hand can bring about some nasty collisions. For evidence, look no further than Bill Laswell's *Operazone* project, a triumph of misplaced intelligence in the service of gratuitous musical amalgamation. Veteran producer Alan Douglas conceived the superficially moody yet ultimately void collection of operatic themes passed through Laswell's blender. Karl Berger, whose Creative Music Studio in Woodstock is indelibly inscribed on this last worthy map of musical innovation, here provides sonicomic arrangements for *The Mental Songs*. The ensemble conceals line players like bassist Mark Dresser and bassist Becky Finkel while soloists Bjørn Lomseth on tenor and Graham Haynes on cornet and flugelhorn prettify, but never ruffle, the surface.

JULIAN COWLEY

## Justin Bennett

**Endless Sound 1: Dervish**  
VIRVIR 052 CD

## Justin Bennett

**Endless Sound 2: Ocean**  
VIRVIR 053 CD

Both of these releases originated in multimedia formats, ensuring you don't get the whole story now they've been issued in their own right. In editions of 100 copies, as part of an *Endless Sound* series intended for repeat play. Further, neither of these discs quite seem to pick up the environmental sampling of Bennett's previous *Cryspace* or *The Missions Of Tongue*. *Ocean* was an audio installation, first presented at the Jan Van Eyck Akademie in Maastricht, and consists of a periodic rush of electronic and data signals rolling back and forth like surf on a beach. The digital sounds are sprindly icy and baring, with ragged speech fragments appearing out of sweating radar signal whine, and a denser body of crackling and congested thunder underneath. Bennett writes of the ocean being, instead of the horizon or the lowmood deep, "an informational ocean" — "one has to move with the flows and currents that define its geography" if this is his vision that space doesn't open up here. The soundscape is too caught up in the motif of reproducing the

sense of surf with the sound of data, and becomes rather flatly representative. Fine for an Ambient soundscape, perhaps, but unlike the experiments of Scrimm or even Holger Czukay, it doesn't generate that sense of flow, currents or drift that Bennett talks about in his mission statement.

*Dervish* is more dimensional. The soundtrack for a video piece, it makes productive use of a few layered textures — busy, rumbling and rasping — in slow rotating intersections, like grinding the edge of cymbals. Calling the album *Dervish*, tethering it to the eclecticism and mystique of that word, is an intimate part of how much of this kind of music posits itself schizophrenically between modernity and rather more fantasies. Ironically the album might speak greater magic, if it was called "Another Day In Den Haag", but these slowly shifting bulks and rafters of sound — amorphous, sprawling, and sometimes shrill — have enough spatial and temporal purchase of their own to be more than Ambient picture painting.

PATT HYCHIE

## Blonde Redhead

**Melody Of Certain Damaged Lemons**  
TONGUE AND GLO, 92.16 CD LP

If 1998's *An Expression Of The Inexpressible* suggested that Blonde Redhead had progressed beyond their roots as a No Wave-inspired guitar group, then this latest album broadens their range of expression further, shedding much of their original kinetic energy in favour of an inpatient melodicism. With its crisp, rhythmic of a recurring off-beat and percussive handclaps, the rock-rock structure of "In Particular" at first looks like the pattern established on the previous LP. Kazu Haino's wailing vocals perfectly suit the mechanical drift of the song, but gradually more sensual elements seep in and the edges become softened. "Hated Because Of Great Qualities" is more overtly melodic, with no sign of Blonde Redhead's customary urgency, veering close to ballad territory. The first big surprise, though, is the following song, "Loved Despite Of Great Faults". Here the spiralling guitar and Amoreo Pace's nasal vocals have an odd Beavis-like flavour, not the kind of crap off-the-pipe snarl you expect from Dares, but with the pared back melodic drive found on parts of *The White Album*. Not that Blonde Redhead plunge headlong into standard verse-chorus arrangements: the music retains a certain open-ended quality so that you're never overly

comfortable with this emergent pop sensibility. This is *Not*! bridges both the spastic rhythms of the past and the neo-pop of the present. For *The Damaged* takes the plunge into fragile territory as Kazuo's voice, on the point of cracking throughout, is accompanied by bare-boned piano and acoustic guitar. *Melody Of Certain Damaged Lemons* marks an adventurous departure.

TONY HIDE

## Bloodcount

*Solution Point*

WILHELM SCHEWITZ/TOUCH CD

Tim Berne's powerful quartet Bloodcount has won a solid reputation for the directness and consistency of its playing, but this live recording, which had a limited mail order only release in 1997, shows clearly that Berne's skilful writing is a crucial enabling factor. Tightly arranged ensemble passages establish tensions and alignments between the musicians which are forcefully developed and cunningly modified as space opens up for spacing and soaring. Berne's blowing on alto and baritone is as lean and purposeful as ever, and is matched stroke for stroke by Chris Speed on tenor and clarinet, bassist Michael Formanek and Jim Black on drums. This is without question a group of four equal voices all are ready to carry the rhythm, transform themes or add colour, and their shifting roles continually modify the familiar balance of the quartet configuration. With each Bloodcount release Berne and Speed sound more complementary, reciprocally enhancing without costiness. Formanek and Black shut the formulae and are constantly diverting. Crugging riffs give way to fast sustained layers, elegant melodic fragments change shape to admit intense repetitious probing of oblique motifs. Berne's structures not only allow but actively encourage versatility and inversion, and these musicians are abundantly equipped to respond accordingly. *Solution Point* is notable more for imaginative vitality than for the raw energy its name suggests. Black's solo on the closing track, driving yet sophisticated, complex yet communicative, could stand as the album's hallmark.

JULIAN COWLEY

## Arthur Blythe Trio

*Spirits In The Field*

WYANT 53024 CD

Once the piano — that wood and metal contraption designed to mass-murder the tempered system — has been hurled from the window, jazz improvisers step out into dizzying spaces of freedom. Vocalised piano and lightning-quick, the alto saxophone makes best use of the possibilities of the purrless, trio (sax, bass and drums). No machinery to save you from your lack of culture or your dearth of imagination as stark and

stripped down as a Suprematist circus. Omara Coleman showed the way, improvising melodies that continually modulate the key. Henry Threadgill's *Ar* demonstrated what compositional strategies can supply. Today following this pioneering work, there is a plethora of alto-led, piano-less trios, though a sense of poach — of arch, postmodernist simulacrum — tends to replace the punch and pugnancy and joy of the innovators (the first cut is the deepest).

In this over-precious context, where the word 'downtown' lovers like a tawdry advertising slogan, Arthur Blythe's heady, soulful, gutsy blowing comes as a relief. The trio's drummer Cecil Brooks III — himself responsible for some seething organ jazz on the label — puts it this way: "When you hear Arthur, you're hearing the very essence of jazz, the blood and guts of the people who built this country." Of course, without the artistic weight to back it up, such claims can evaporate into the clichés used to flag everything from Levi jeans to Bruce Springsteen albums. The point is that Arthur Blythe's music really does hit the spot.

The bass parts for the trio are supplied by Bob Stewart's tuba. He establishes funky riffs, then allows them to cycle in the minds of the musicians and listeners while he contributes expressive smears and post-fusion coloration. He makes his esophagane instrument



Pan Sonic's *Pika Vainio* reviewed pages 56 and 61



Marc Ribot

# Marc Ribot & Los Cubanitos Postizos Muy Divertido

WARNER BROS. 1567832932 CD

Teaming up with Los Cubanitos Postizos to play songs written in the 40s and 50s by the Cuban composer Arsenio Rodriguez seems like a new departure for Marc Ribot, but it's also, more mischievously, a return home. "The hills of New Jersey are beautiful, it would please me to go back," Ribot laments at one point, celebrating the town of his youth and early garage band antics in pasiche-balled form, and sounding more like Keanu Reeves than Ibrahim Ferrer.

That kind of understated uncertainty as to whether this is Havana or downtown New York provides the album as a whole. Ranging between hushed serenading in a low-key palette to more feisty percussive numbers with vocal call and response from The Postizos (though, bar perhaps the final

track, there's nothing absolutely steamy here), Ribot's guitar lines often start off trickling gently through jazz-Latin or flamenco inspired runs. Before he starts firing away cylinders in his dosing lead line, slowly burning tracks like "El Gaucho Rojo" might have appeared on any of Blue Note's Latin-inspired 60s compilations of the last few years. However, as the music becomes more expansive, he'll weave in openly bluesy licks or fizzer rock 'n' roll jams. Anything goes, from swinging warmth to the odd snatch of No Wave stunner, and it seems Ribot has found in Cuban music a perfect rhythmic and melodic frame — low key, but easily intensified — to carry such a liquid, and gently genre-bending style.

As well as having played with Arto Lindsay and Caetano Veloso, he's touched on the arthouse Latin terrain before in his playing with Tom Waits, but his trademark spiky angularity makes only a few well-timed appearances here. Ribot seems keener to let rip, instead, in a bluesier, rockier fashion when the music gets toasty, but "Obsession" and the fiery closer, "Carmela Dame La Llave", do recall that Latin-Gothic Rain Dogs territory. In fact, fans of Rain Dogs will notice seemingly direct quotes in "Obsession" from "Cemetery Poika", with its hysterical, brittle guitar and emphatic, clomping booted bassline — a seemingly Cuban/Polish interface. "No Puedo Frenar" also has an unusual sub-aquatic feel. Tube and organ add a mournful resonant edge, and Ribot plays in a stiff either-like style. The result is somewhere between a funeral and a village square dance.

Nevertheless, *Muy Divertido* is colourful and abrasive, but not wholly 'out there'. There's rarely the same kind of double-talk, as when Arto Lindsay introduces brief noise attacks in the midst of a Brazilian love song, and the songs here are rarely as sultry. But "El Divorcio" is gutsy and percussive, "Jaquero" a driving and beatfully offbeat downtown allusion. The Champs' "Tequila", and there's still room for prickly and speedy pyrotechnics on "Carmela Dame La Llave".

MATT FYFFICHE

# John Cage Sonatas And Interludes NATURAL SOUND PRODUCTIONS CD

Long-time Cage interpreter Giancarlo Cardini performs these early keyboard games by the American master. Unable to fit a percussive ensemble on stage to accompany a dance performance, John Cage modified or prepared a piano to act as one-person percussion band. Making a virtue out of necessity, in 1946-48 he created the Sonatas And Interludes for the new instrument and they remain the most popular and accessible of his compositions. This is partly because of their beguiling sonorities — the effect is often compared to a Javanese gamelan. It's also because the problematic chance concept central to Cage's work after 1951 is less apparent, and the scores are precisely notated.

The point does the preparation, and this is itself an act of interpretation. Cage gives precise measurements and instructions, though in practice these can only be a rough guide. 45 of the 88 keys are altered — some slightly, some

so completely that they no longer make a recognisable piano sound. Each key has three strings and either one, two or all three are altered, so sometimes there's a mixture of the original pitch and a new sound. The soft pedal shifts the piano action so that the hammers only strike two strings, and on a prepared piano the effect of this is much more dramatic. Old hardware is essential. The nuts, bolts and wire of today have too much zinc, lacking the bell-like resonance of hardware with a high iron content.

The gamelan comparison has become a cliché, and the pieces are also often described as incantatory and hypnotic. Cardini however performs them in a way that retrieves much of the suggestion of dreaminess and hypnosis. He offers playing of crystalline clarity, intensely rhythmic and dynamic. There's a clear contrast with the recent recording by Alek Kays on Bridge, who is less insouciant and more poetic though in a reverberant and rather muffled acoustic. Here, Cardini offers a compelling interpretation of some unassuming classics of modern music.

ANDY HAMILTON

# Uri Caine/La Gaia Scienza

Love Tugue Robert Schumann  
WARNER BROS. 151049 CD

Uri Caine's rampage through the classics continues. After Wagner and Mahler, the jazz pianist has arranged — if that term isn't too conservative — the 16 songs of Robert Schumann's *Dreiheile cycle*. Inherited between them are the four movements of Schumann's *Piano Quartet* op 47, played straight by La Gaia Scienza, Warner & Wainor's regular chamber ensemble.

*Dreiheile* — *The Poet's Love or Poet's Love* — shows Schumann's intuitive sense of form the *Piano Quartet* sees that intuition shoehorned into a classical structure. The songs are fragments in the Romantic sense, but are not really independent. Uri Caine's disruption of the cycle is presumably meant to cast new light on its components, but it's tempting to program the CD to get an uninterrupted performance of the *Piano Quartet*.

Covering all stylistic bases, Mark Ledford is vocalist on all the songs, with David Moss or one of a number of poets — Schumann's Wechsler Caine, Julie Patton and Marko Takahashi — added. Uri Caine on piano and David Gilmore on electric guitar are the only instrumentalists. "Im Wunderschönen Monat Mai" is beautifully fragile, while the remarkable "Ich Will Meiner Seele Tanchen" — a poem in Japanese — is mimed by Marko Takahashi against vocalise by Mark Ledford. Then Caine and Gilmore take it up while Ledford scats.

"Ich Grolle Nach", in complete contrast, comes across like a gospel ballad, losing the emotional savagery of the original. On the last song, "Die Allen Bosen Leiden", Ledford whistles against a reggae rhythm by piano and guitar, who then play serene lines in unison. I'm taken with the vocals of David Moss, a genre-crossing singer who is an American answer to Peter Hammill, and on "Im Riesen Im Heiligen Strome" both singers sound like they've been listening to the Hammer horrors of Hammill's *Fall Of The House Of Usher*.

Quite how the quartet movements are meant to comment on the songs is hard to work out. La Gaia Scienza defer to authenticity in using a fortepiano, which offers intimacy and is less dominant than a modern piano — though keyboard instruments don't improve with age and the choice of an untried 1850 instrument is dubious. There was a clear justification for Arnold Lohr from Mahler's light music borrowings. Here, however, there seems a strong element of the poskake of stuffy Leder Hosen. But though it's often bizarre, Love Tugue is never less than thought-provoking.

ANDY HAMILTON

# Curd Duca Elevator 3 PILLS PLUTARQUE CD

The latest in Curd Duca's ongoing series of dystopian lift music, *Elevator 3* is a rocker ride

with and snarl. Cecil Brooks specialises in the complex, tricky rhythms that are the mark of New Orleans-source deep funk, but he is never phased by Blythe's sudden inspirations and light-angled curves.

Arthur Blythe, meanwhile, is on a roll unleashing linear sterility leavened by passages of limpid reflection and sudden beams of impromptu humour. Blythe has not always been of a great output of live music, making Blythe makes the over-sold work of more fashionable albums seem petty and repressed. Glenn Miller to the Duke Ellington. The impact of *Sweets In His Fux* is so immediate and uncontested, one suspects it is only because the Savant label has been assigned to some outcasted backwater that Arthur Blythe's name is not being shrouded from the mophos.

BEN WATSON



than last year's *Devil 2* – with some rather harsh sound manipulation going on. He displays what sound like field recordings of animals electrocuted sound switches, snapping CDs, film scores, gong beats, digital skrimales, finger-banged bands and muscote concrete. The 48 tracks average under a minute each. The shortest, and one of the best, is only six seconds long. Tracks run into each other, sort of a stream-of-consciousness. There's quite a discipline to cutting it down to short. But it does permit the tracks to work hard. At times he achieves pageant and suggestive minimalism, at others it's needless listening with tracks hopping all over the shop during their brief span. Curc Duka seems to operate on two fronts. On one hand, he subjects the music of administered culture to extreme deformation while preserving its promise of pleasure. On the other hand, he offers nosome sound-alone sonic explorations that give rise to just such alluring comfort zones. Between the two prongs he produces haunting, mobile music, that revels in the delicacy and sheer reproducibility of the digital. It's a little like a computer parasite about the way he splashes about in the bracket waters of polluted streams. Manipulative and nasal at times.

## WILL MCWILSON

## DAT Politics

Tracto Flirt  
Self-Service ID

## DAT Politics

Villiger  
A 1268 635 00

## Tone Rec

Demo Pack Demo  
SUBROSA 52148 CD

increasingly embracing digital technology, French unit Tone Rec has moved some way, since the only drone ambience and drum jams of their earlier work. Following last year's *Caucy-Rock: Demo Rock Demol*, it appends three crisp, invasive new constructions with remixes from To Rococo Rot and Powerbook over Fernex, plus two from DaT Boites.

five-strong group formed from a core of Tonic members. As ever the material here is solid and inventive, full as with DAT. Politics that the real excitement emerges. Bouncing ideas off one another, not content to stay on any single successful formula, their two albums are a total revelation. Each track becomes a new beginning, a new adventure where can we take this? What if we try this? Blistering with possibilities, structures are pushed and pulled and explode excitedly as thought and play becoming audible and corporeal. Their music falls somewhere between the off-beat textures of Oval or Fish and the spiritual overtones of Mike of Telemus. *Don't Stop* is a clever fusion of Hank, it is somehow fresh yet more primitive than Tonic's fully formed fleshy structures. The laptop warms stabs and screeches away at their source material, fanning out bones and rearranging the rhythmic skeleton in a dynamic, shifting series of gritty dislocation descriptions.

Where Time Rents' lead grooves appear to be called from mind-numbing DAI policies move in order, fracturing the best without totally forsaking its funkiness. Cleverly painted and nearly dead, their music surrounds you with a dizzying stream of texture-chunks: tone-pops, choppy, amphetamine cuts, stutters, clicks and pops, abrasive strugs and leaps. Refusing to impose meaning, neither album comes with any tracklisting or info. Released on the new 50-cp label, Fractal Art's firsts a scanty collection of rugged post-Techno experiments its crude, foggy, lo-p-production, erratic rhythms and pops and vibrant one-finger melody underpinned by the most incoherent, off-kilter customers are mentioned in the box set, not at all. A final track blithely meshes lead recording with studio processing, conversations in an airy collapsing into a fierce treble shower of shredded sounds.

Here to this, Wilger sounds more focused even as individual tracks grow increasingly restless and sprawling. Though it occasionally drags, its 11 tracks over 43 minutes are so packed with detail that by the end you're left drained and disoriented by the extent of their exploration. Blasting with overwrought

yet refreshing and (incredibly) fun. DAT Politics go where they want, laying down a blistering mess of an inspirational opening statement. A brilliant discovery.

## DAVID HOWELL

## Michael Finnissy

Gershwin Arts  
8119 Penn 20th St.

In the 1910s, composer and musical visionary Ferruccio Busoni wrote: "Every notation is, in itself, the transcription of an abstract idea. The instant the pen seizes it, the idea loses its original form. The idea becomes a sonata or a concerto; this is already an arrangement of the original. The performance of the work is also a transcription and this too, however free, can never do away with the original." The idea that all composition is a transcription came as a revelation to Michael Finnissy, who had been preoccupied with the latter from the beginning of his career. Two large sets for piano, *Verdi Transcriptions* and *Gershwin Arrangements* (now *More Gershwin*) were begun in the 70s, and increasingly Finnissy's output became less abstract, more concerned with existing musical material.

Illinois was concerned to defend improvisation and the freedom of the interpreter. Finnissy's own attitude to improvisation, at least as evinced by these often disturbing deconstructions of George Gershwin's songs in piano arrangements, is more ambivalent. Finnissy's response to Gershwin is quite divorced from his use of jazz motifs in his music. He is not concerned with musical found objects. There is no connection with chord-based jazz improvisation, *insofar as* there is a separating chord structure, it's the melodies which are constant. In fact you'd be pressed to find much connection at all with Georges Gershwin's *Jazz Age* era. Finnissy began improvising on the songs for racialist scenarios, but his critical cultural agenda was there from the start. "They developed as part of a meeting discourse on popular culture in the 1930s, and they were not meant to be taken literally. Inspired, rough traffic and a klatch of racist New Orleans in a bootstrap fantasy."

discourse, and the *lexical ambiguity* of his soundworld with the given *lexical* rhetorical expression that the transcriptions demand in the first book. Finney focuses on the clear songs from the later 20s and 30s such as "Love Is Here To Stay," a Figgie Day "Embraceable You" and "How Long Has This Been Going On?" The second set of arrangements, 40s standards, are songs from the early 20s with titles such as "Unchained Melody," "Swanee" and "Dove Dive." On the face of it the earlier songs are even less likely material for the alterpiece of the heavyweight British modernist and some might accuse me of New Complexity. But the two books of transcriptions compel the listener's attention in very different ways, the first more troubling, uneasy, even conversationally banal, the second mostly lighter and more improvisatory, some of Finney's most delicate music.

The recording is interesting acoustically: it's gauzy but rather busy, presence imitating early piano recordings. The instrument is a Falcok the handmade piano instead of the usual Steinway: it has a softer sound, more consistent across all registers, which the intimate approach called for (Jan PACE proves to be a heroic interpreter of Finnis's Gershwin transcriptions—a tough, sometimes boiling listen, but an extraordinary achievement).

## ANDY HAMILTON

## Fechn

Hidden Cinema Soundtrack  
AT CAT LATSOUND

lent to its own devices, melancholia can reveal itself to be the most intimate of passions. Bristol-based Debbie Parsons, former partner of Matt Elliott in Third Eye Foundation, transforms this one useful emotion into a swirling funeral procession that covers the 28 compositional fragments contained in this collection. Drawing upon a wide variety of sound sources – from acoustic instrumentation such as piano, trumpet and cello to Ambient street noise, found voices and digitally deconstructed samples – Hidden Cinema's *Symposium* obliquely explores the

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Playing possum:  
Lou Reed



## Lou Reed

Ecstasy

RRR52 935/474252 CD

A lot of hurt has passed under the bridge since Lou Reed last took the exit to Brooklyn. On this hearing he hasn't forgotten the way back there. "I've got a hole in my heart as big as a truck/And it won't be filled by a one-night fuck," he roars on "Like A Possum," the album's monstrous 18-minute masterpiece. Yeah, go on, laugh, you're allowed to; sure, the couplets are numbingly dumb as they come, and as songster smiles go, Lou coming on playful "Like A Possum" is designed to get everyone rolling in the aisles. But the laughter grows uneasy way before Reed hits that truck line. And besides, the cutesy possum stuff of the delayed first verse, where Reed and longtime guitar partner Mike Rathke generate the naggingly repetitive motif that persists throughout the work. They don't so much riff as open up a raw wound, supplanting guitar on the one channel and suturing guitar on the other, with melody bass and drums voraciously stretching to close it. This roaring, heaving rock is as magnificent as Bob Dylan And The Hawks' infamous

1966 version of "Like A Rolling Stone"; but where Dylan's voice negotiates the chasm opened up beneath him like a suicidal tightrope walker, Reed hurtles himself right into it. His abyssal lyric describes one long night's descent into the early morning depths of the Lower East Side in search of suck, crack, violent solace, anything that'll salt into the gaping wound where his heart used to be. The remorseless slam of the guitars drives the narrator on as, like a Hubert Selby, he scratches at the same sorely enraptured spot, which refuses to burst. Again that "truck/fuck" couplet kicks in, now capped with "like a possum," but no laughs this time. Gambling comedy gives way to total despair, with Reed going down with his eyes wide open. His reprieve on "Possum" is rarer and a million times more "real" than anything on the limply literate New York. Unlike that dead-end album, here he dead-ends/deadens through plain-speaking lines that tumble heading from tragedy through drinker's shallow braggadocio into low comedy and grotesque Bukowski burlesque, making the words resonate so hard the song throbs with all the feelings the narrator vainly strains for. The way the wailer in Reed arduously repeats lines through the evolving narrative—that's right, the truck line and the fuck line and the "ain't that just my fuck" line—each time with a new twist, makes it a fantastically expressive vehicle for Reed the vocalist, who delivers his most astounding vocal performance since the title tracks of *Street Hassle* and *Blue Mask*.

Ecstasy is grist for this extraordinary work alone—easily the equal of other great extended Reed compositions like *Metal Machine Music*, "The Bells" and the aforementioned "Street Hassle"; over time it might well hang in there with such enduring VU narrative experiments as "Sister Ray" and "Murder Mystery." But the album has other strong moments. Amateur analysts get off on the psychodramas that purportedly rack through the embers of his last marriage. They're probably the same people who loaned New York to their literary tutors, for these pieces similarly creak with effect. However, on two tracks Reed projects his pain as empathy for the downtrodden: In the twisted logic of "Future Farmers Of America" and the shamelessly optimistic "Big Sky," the upturned New Deal song closing the album.

BIRBA KOPF

this latest tickle Pick. Recorded at one of The Dead's favorite locations during a peak period in their career—and featuring the classic line-up of Jerry Garcia, second guitarist Bob Weir, bassist Phil Lesh, drummer Bill Kossygin and Mickey Hart, vocalist and blues horn player Pigpen and keyboardist Tom Constanten—it takes the whole of disc one to roll by before the magic really kicks in. Littered with strident singing from Garcia supported by the others in a workaday mood, they shuffle through such crowd-pleasers as "Casey Jones," "Dire Wolf" and "Hama Tied" with a nervous intensity that gives little indication of what is in store. After a truly terrible misjudgment of "Cumberland Blues" (with totally shot vocals courtesy of Garcia and Weir), they bow out to suddenly apologise. So far not so good, but suddenly things improve dramatically.

Discs two and three are what makes this one special. As soon as the opening riff of "Dark Star" is drummed, you instinctively know that the group are finally back on course. A new strength surges through the Dead from this point on, as they temporarily scupper the previous disc's song format and instead set sail into a boiling ocean of electrically fired, hallucinogenically inspired improvisation. Using "Dark Star" as their navigational marker, they blow out a series of collective improvisations that take in such landmarks as "The Other One" and "Cautions (Do Not Stop On The Tracks)" from Anthem Of The Sun and a vocal-free jam of "Uncle John's Band" from *Warning! Demos!* Reed Caught up in the momentum-momentum of the improvisation, the entire group bonds together, submerging individual personalities, leaving only a gorgeous cascade of psychedelic harmony. Suffice to say, this is without doubt one of the finest examples of acid rock you could ever hope to hear.

"Saint Stephen" from *Americanos* and "The Eleven" round up disc two effectively, while Anthems' "Glauber" surrounds "The Man Tree" (aka "Playing In The Clouds") alongside standard renditions of "Feedback," "We Bid You Goodnight" and "Turn On Your Lovelight" from *Lives/Dead*. Under the shadow of that mighty "Dark Star," however, even these jewels almost pale into insignificance.

EDWIN POUNCEY

## Charles Hayward

Near + Far: Live In Japan Volume

Three

LOCUS LOCUS LUS601 CD

You can count the number of great avant rock singers on the fingers of one hand: Robert Wyatt, Peter Dinklage, Dagmar Krause—the mind goes suddenly blank after these august names. It would appear that virtually all avant rock groups spend the lion's share of released time getting the intricate music right, rather than the singer. You'd never get away with this in top-flight Heavy Metal, where the choice or change of a lead vocalist can make or break a group. So why do avant rock fans

nonetheless range of feeling to largely detrimental effect.

A certain calm assurance is shown in the way modular blocks of melody are coupled with treated rhythmic clinking and sparse metallic loops, but the rigid uniformity of mood feels such successive combination of all freedoms or surprise. A more radical approach to arrangement and sound balance might also have brought an extra edge to Parsons' thinking. The disc is most closely allied to that growing body of releases predicated on the possibilities of an ideal film aesthetic. Obscured with hiatus and background detail, the movie soundtrack for which no movie exists could soon constitute a musical genre in its own right. Everything from collections of tracks inspired by the work of

individual directors to the minimalist framing of possible actions taking place somewhere outside the composer's sphere of control would qualify for inclusion. Holding your breath for too long in hushed anticipation of some imagined gesture, however, is enough to leave anyone feeling a little sad.

KEN MCILLIG

## Grateful Dead

Discs 4 Pecos Volume 16 Fillmore

Auditorium 11/8/69

GRATEFUL DEAD 504016 JC60

Although Grateful Dead tape archivist Dick Latessa died last year, his guiding hand still pushes along the project that carries his name

That Grateful Dead Records are continuing this series of concert recordings—culled from the group's secret stash—is a good news for devoted Deadheads, whose appetite for Dead music is seemingly insatiable. For those who still can't hear what the fuss was about, Dick's selection of jams offers a valuable insight into how a community defined, working unit like The Dead operated, with every duff note coaxed vocal and accidental feedback squall exposed and preserved. This admirable refusal to amputate out the laws and longwindedly heightens the intensity of the musical trip. That is, once they have limbered up and allowed the sometimes elusive spirit of their creative muse to flood their souls with psychedelic psychic energy.

Which is exactly what happens throughout

but up with so many mediocre singers?

Unlike the marian instrumental *Dode*, *Agente's* is the last instalment of usonian British drummer Charles Hayward's Japanese adventures, *Wear/Hr*, hinges on his voice. And it's not built about the bush here for Hayward is not a great singer. In fact, after struggling to endure his grating efforts over seven songs ("That Distant Light" is particularly painful) I'd say he was a pretty lousy singer. But his choices will doubtless tell you that his is an anti-virtuoso style. Well, they're welcome to it. His lyrics have a quirky quality not unlike the lend fave appeared on Sach's *Machina's* first few albums, but require an earth-toning cool such as Wyllie's or a competent crooner like Richard Sincilar to unlock their poetic potential. Mercurially, *Seven Full Days* leaves the sporadic vocal duties to a simpler (On the positive side, Hayward's drumming is as robustly inventive as ever) and Otsuno

Yoshihide, Kazufusa Uchihashi and Tatsuya Yoshida, who number among the big noses of the Japanese avant-rock/improv scene, are on hand to provide solid support.

CHRIS BLACKFORD

**Tim Hodgkinson**

**Sang**  
RECOMMENDED RECORDS WITH 2 CD

Long contains four new pieces from Tim Hodgkinson, who extends his harsh but investigative blend of composition and improv with a sonic palette drawn from somewhere between Central Asia and Dadaist jazz. Except for "HA," which combines rehearsal fragments of two other Hodgkinson pieces over the improv vocalizations of actress Federica Santoro, these are solo projects which utilize his multi-instrumental talents. "The Road To Ezrin" — viola, piano, alto sax, percussion and live electronic sound-processing — verges on a shonky electroacoustic improv; a conscious tribute to Hodgkinson's travels in the lands of instruments such as the *oud* and *tanbur* and the *lithmos*. His music characteristically concentrates on performative gesture and timbre, the voice doing to the strings or whirring, the sax, repeated, itself filled with

of perception, recalling the serenity of Central Asian ritual but laid out as a series of discrete sound events and sudden pressure changes with the piano as atmospheric toll "Gd'Sh" for B flat clarinet played in real-time against a prepared tape sourced from electronic guitar, cymbal and drum – references Iranian music and its modes, understood not as a fixed scale but as a repertoire of performance motifs. Again the piece mines a set of sonic gestures from the violent opening attack of icy electronic rain to abrupt flutters of feld blowing over which the live cymbals, pans and flutes. The *Crackles Of Forests*, "for a large number of solo instruments and a mass of brass," is a concert suite of eleven movements and a monophonic A C major scale of micro-events in a high pitched and sprightly, achieving the mad congestion of Nancarrow before slowing and spreading into separately inflected points. An essay in transformation.

Hodgkinson's music occupies a lean and aggressive space between compositional abstraction and body gesture. It's an abrupt and exposed environment without modernism's group dynamics or Cageian moderation to support it. Instead, it drops the violent stresses and curative rituals of body music. At times you sense that the guttural strokes and high pitched spectral raving of shamanic ritual are presiding over a Western adult body in pieces. Thus it's no surprise that "H.A." arose out of conversations with Sarrato about art and Bushy dance. Perhaps the most involving of the pieces, its racing interplay of soundwaves (imitating wind orthesis), percussions, double basses and string quartets condenses and parts to make way for Sarrato as she swishes emotionalized sound out of her body. Coasting weaving, laughter and surreal whirly it is as if you are spouting sonically unlearned and over turbulent wooden hummers and dirty handied large scale instrumental gestures. When he shifts the weight from his own immediate utterance Hodgkinson's skulls as sonic animator and mediator bring the soundworld to more expansive fusion. However, all these pieces, in one way or another, are missaging the difficulty of that movement.

**MATT PEYTON**

**Ich Schwitze Nie**

Bilaga Flaggan  
TRWENT 0368 02

thinner Floghies transmits as Cheap Flagg, though I wouldn't be surprised if it had some more specific hand-beats-for-combination because Kitz Schwartz's work (the name means I Don't Sweat) exists in a strange twilight zone of sailors' songs/born-as-an-art-reciter—a kind of trash music/poems that recites Tom Waits, Kurt Weill and even Monty Python. Although this album's more upbeat and polished than their last—more synth-driven and simple poppers/hits, instead of their former ramshackle rock skiffle expression—they retain the format of a small, light-colored coat of a tight white for Lars Rudolph's minimalist delivery of lullabies, chansons and arias/songs. Backed by Hanno Lechtmann on drums and Nicholas Busmann on cello and electric bass, and with additional voices of them: trumpet and piano. Rudolph's singing and seductively airy voice is the centerpiece. The whole follows in and out of focus between something you might overhear in the foyer of an East European hotel restaurant—all latzy postcards and sentimental Mizak—and something more husky/perverse. The more Rudolph leans about broken hearts, losses and songs heard on the wind, the more unfamiliar the German becomes. ("Haut-los-couchen over me") The rinks at one point, like a cross between Peter Dinklage and an alley cat. I preferred the earlier album's airy/unsettling approach to genre—the brief quoting of Techno here seems out of place—but this is still a great mix of the punchy and the sleek, deepened and slushy with its own sliding swag.

MATT FITCHER

## Impostor Orchestra

Helopause

A glowing nimbus of cosmic radiation envelopes what could well be the kind of flying-saucer George Adamski used to photograph in the 1950s with a camera.

supposedly given to him by the FBI. The strange craft appears to be hovering over some murky stretch of desert terrain. Then again, the cover image might just be a hoax! Light listing captured on video from an unusual angle. Whatever it is, Jim Tenor, producer and prime mover behind this intriguing project, isn't telling. "Secrets will remain secrets," runs the small personal message on the inside sleeve, below an even dodgier picture of human carcasses being reassembled in some mysterious, alien workshop.

A remarkably perceptive sequence of takes and forges, some only a few seconds long. Holoprise is musical reverse engineering at its most transcendent. To say The Impostor Orchestra sounds like Peter Thomas and Sun Jui getting together to rewrite the soundtrack for *Mrs. Needs Women* is no lazy overstatement. "Interplanetary Politics" and "Germprint" would not have degraded the low budget space-age action of 60s Bavarian television series *Atomsmobile*, while "Last Things Chronicles" and "Martian Survey News Radar" might have been left over from the Audions of Plutonium sessions. Tenor's retro-auditory melting of big band swing and space-age futurism is a seductive and sticky sound trackleery conjures up aliphatic images of abandoned science fiction myths and pop culture speculations. That they remain as evanescent as an Adami's saccharine pectin only adds to their charm.

KEW HOLLINGS

## Iskra 1903

Chapter One 1970-1972  
CHANGEM4301 3800

Chapter One is another historically important Emanem release from the early years of British Improv, comprising music previously available on the Incus label plus 107 minutes of previously unreleased material. The British trio Incus 1963 was formed in 1970 by trombonist Paul Rutherford, guitarist Derek Bailey and double bassist Barry Guy, who had previously collaborated in Spontaneous Music Ensemble (see *Withdrawal*, 1966-7, also on Emanem). The trio named itself after the

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Pole



## Pole

100% SHIMMER 17 CD

On the face of it, Stefan Betke is producing a very savvy, so-what? music, compared to some modern millionaires, the bunker dub he releases under the name Pole (less a descriptive legend than a copyright mark) doesn't seem particularly radical — no noise terror or click/tut hermeticism here. It's the sound of sand in the joints of the machinery: a music of cackle, hiss and carefully placed bassquakes.

Is this the sonic equivalent of Julia Kristeva's *ecriture* — a figuratively 'feminine' writing which she posits in opposition to more 'phallic' discourse — concerned more with shifting texture, suspending pause, a liberating fetishism of microtones? Or of George Batallie's notion of *lyricisme* — a formlessness outside genre or concept? Or has Betke simply spent too much time alone in the studio poring over microcassette and could do with being reintroduced to Dr Funkenstein?

If Betke's work evokes most of the current definitions, it never really fully falls prey to any of them. If many of the click/tut crew apply howling to Techno/Ambient, Pole does it to dub; but whereas the nuevo dub of Zion Train et al is clear and polished, jaunty and relentlessly hygienic, Betke realises a more 'grubbiness' that recalls the street scart, stained debris and torn edges of some modern art: Marcel Duchamp's rotoreliefs, Picasso's trash collages, Jean Arp's torn papers, Cy Twombly's graffiti. This is an (in)distinctly amniotic dub, fuzzy, full of odd fluidities and watery sonorities. "Tut" echoes with distant voices of unclear provenance, drowning/wavering in the bathscape gurgle of the music's break and shudder.

The opening "Silberfisch" is like nothing so much as a dream Jah Wobble track — ie vax-free, and nearer the pressure drop concentration of *Motor Box* than New Age decorativeness. In keeping with his horizontal opening out of dub logic, Pole/betke isn't always a clear and separate (and subjugated) element, but rather a ghostly presence that descends with a pentecostal shudder to set ripples off everywhere: sometimes a gigantic sandstorm presence, at others pure atmospheric rasp and hum. Ghostly it may be, but it makes its presence felt — the bottom end is mixed far heavier than a lot of nuevo dub (too heavy for my poor speakers).

Repeated listening reveals how bitmap-precise Pole/betke is, and how soundtrack-omnibus in the folding and placement of ragged coughs, whirpool arcs and omnibus chords — as the track winds down into an amoebic trail you hear how the various, apparently random bits of grit and flicker have in fact been playing sustaining roles (where guitar chops or keyboard trails would normally be). "Karusell" is spun on a short 'tr' snift, on-the-run noise — clammy, sweaty, panic-stricken. The lovely "Sir and" is a mirage shower with distant echoes of Augustus Pabst's 'R'n' East' sound, but less parched, more of an undulant masculine music of drip and ripple. If too many acts

merely applique 'dub' onto dead/dull indie/funk bizness as usual, Pole isn't afraid of admitting it as a resounding LACK at the centre of his solo/song. Listen to Pole long enough and you begin to wonder what precisely is being circled round, what is not being spelled out, or rather, what is being spelled out through these dispersed sonic cryptograms. The final track, "Fohlenfutz", abandons beats! altogether and settles into a pure irradiation of tones.

But I'm not 100 per cent convinced. A few of the tracks here drift out beyond that 'irradiation' into wispy negligibility. In truth, after three or four tracks you've pretty much heard all you're going to hear in terms of Betke's range of hues/setting. (Six or seven minutes of ripple and ick is not quite long enough for hypnosis to set in.) From track to track there's not much textural difference, and there's a definite limit to these small, self-generated variations on a pattern; the dominant mood is so etiolated/claustrophobic that you start to wonder if this isn't the sonic equivalent of trying to have a conversation with someone whose low monotone mumble never perks. (To be honest, at one point I had to break off and play a Prince track just to check I was still alive.)

In his press notes Betke mentions a few musical heroes — and I'd say he should get the phone number of someone like Fred Frith and jump out on some sort of stylistic limb before self-parody or paralysis sets in (if it hasn't already), before all that lonesome time in the studio sends him a bit control-freak funny. This music already sounds flat, sick, haunted by some loss or lack I can't quite bring itself to go beyond or reconfigure. Pole may have reached its polar limit; Betke should now maybe unclench his stylistic lock, wonder out of his transiemus bunker and let himself be jarred by some Other sound, just with something a little more improvisatory and loose. Or concentrate on producing a truly stellar/ subterranean series of 12" detonations — a format possibly better suited to Pole's ambiguous magnetism.

IAN PENMAN

Between the two cassette versions, *Improvisation 5* (1972) is the one in which the first disc is a 1970 (the second time-up featuring violinist Philip Wachsmann instead of Bailey, started out in 1977, eventually releasing *Shirley* 1993 on Play Records; in 1995, made two albums — a double LP for Incus, also titled *Shirley* 1993 as well as contributing one LP to a still unreleased and much sought after triple box set called *Free Improvisation* on Deutsche Grammophon).

Disc one showcases the trio's earlier pieces at the ICA in London, September 1970, which mark them out as an improvising unit of considerable sensitivity, prepared to investigate the most delicate of timbral nuances with patience and restraint. This type

of approach was dubbed 'the English sickness' by German improvisers in 1973) who were still immersed in the fast and furious, high energy playing of Ajfer and later-period Coltrane. Listening to the 25 minute previously unreleased "Improvisation 0" undoubtedly the highlight of the first disc, one realises the extent to which *Shirley* 1993 had moved improvisation on to a qualitative, non-dramatic soundworld closer to Webern — but with extra textural, pitchless overtones, such as the thematic US free jazz of the 60s Bailey's dry, brittle pluckings and rubbings (arguably the most texturally resourceful of the trio at this stage) are memorably balanced by Rutherford's lively tinklings on piano the disc put down the trombone for this one) and Guy's arco-whispers.

Disc two begins with three "Diffuse

preliminary tentativeness" followed by the aforementioned "KA-POW!" followed by the other half of their *Improvisation 0*, recorded in May 1972. The *Improvisation 5* (1972) reveals a little texturally adventurous, the *Improvisation 0* showing signs of the hard-edged percussive voicings of his mature style. Rutherford pushes the trombone that far further on *Improvisation 10* and *Improvisation 11*, unravelling delightful Roccoco phrases and squeezed out polyphonic effects.

Finally, disc three is all previously unreleased music from London 1971 and Germany 1972. "Entry 11" (London) atmospherically uses amplification to explore snorer dissonance, while the German piece shows the trio at perhaps their most chaotic, moving from lively turbulence to almost lyrical calm

— at lightning speed. The quality of the interactive listening on all three discs is exemplary. Presumably there's more to come. CHRIS BLACKFOOT

## Jackie-O Motherfucker

Box Set  
100% SHIMMER 17 CD

20 years after the Dead Kennedys, a group name such as Jackie-O Motherfucker doesn't have quite the same impact. It is, however, an apt description of this barely belated collective, who clearly have a thing for the swingin' 60s and attempt a major reconstruction of the tables of several American music genres on their third record. With two covers that attempt historical

reversionism — the prison camp spiritual "Go Down, Old Hannah" and "Amazing Grace" — at the center of *Pig 5*, it's clear that this Portland/Batman/NYC group wants listeners to reconsider some musical myths.

The letterpressed insert cards in the initial CD package address both these songs, explaining how "Amazing Grace" was written by English slave trader John Newton and how "it was frightening to hear 'Go Down, Old Hannah'" because the song is about prisoners who would rather die than face another day in the far-praier prisons of the early 1900s. For-profit prisons are back in vogue in the States these days, so these Improv Motherfuckers sing their own freedom songs about the best they currently breed. The unfortunate "Amazing Grace" melody is a ghost here.

Hiding in the group's pastoral wash until it rises from a plaintive saxophone eight minutes in while a creaking wood solo of the passing time Among the folky numbers here are only the lolling ballad "Beautiful September (We Are Gone There)" and "reversionism" unless making a case against The Cowboy Junkies (Canadians actually count).

The rest of *Pig 5* is more like the group's two earlier albums on Imp, springing from 60s American references like the Factory, with the Velvetes freestyle jam "Michigan Avenue Social Club," the Tony Conrad-like hypnotic wail riff on "Native Emission" or the electronic eye-cooler "Analogue Skillet" with Portland's Nudge. The folky rewrites and old-school avant-garde links fuse seamlessly into a lush pastoral that comes together on "Your Cells Are in My Motor," a nine-minute meditation that's both downhome packing and accordion numeration.

**TOP PICK**

## Jazzkammer

Timebox

RAVE GARDENS/IMP (CD) C

The Norwegian duo Jazzkammer welds turntables, Casio snowcone generators, samplers and guitars, improvising low-grade electronic environments and fermenting edgy collages from their concentrated pool of analogical pollutants. The density of recorded sound forms the substance of their music: static, crackle, distortion, interference and hum, formerly viewed as marginal sources of ambience, now occupy the foreground. More conventionally musical elements have been isolated and appear only in shadowy form, as noisily traces consigned to the periphery of audibility.

John Hegre and Lasse Marhaug have varied performing credentials, encompassing noise experimentation, hardcore, post-rock and Tripping. The eight improvised assemblages on *Timebox* draw that experience into an assured, if radical, sense of design. The legacy of landmark electroacoustic composition is regularly implied, sometimes openly acknowledged. Field recordings of more or less defensible environmental

sounds are smuggled in, most pointedly on "Happy New Year" where celebratory fireworks are eked with the baleful sound of a tank to a CNN war report.

These pieces were recorded last year in London. Bergen and Trondheim 60 years after John Cage imitated his Imaginary Landscape series. Cage's title granted audiences a contextual crutch to assist their entry into his live electronic music's strange climate of audio frequency oscillators amplified coils and variable speed turntables. Jazzkammer's compositions, descended by whatever circuitous route from those pioneering soundscapes, carry traces such as "Silver Solder Morning" and "Ghosts Made Of Paper." More fanciful than Cage and less nihilist, but 60 years on liberated sound this well-crafted requires no further explanation.

**ALIAN COWLEY**

## Jeru The Damaja

Heretofore

KNOW/SAGE (CD) K20104 CD

Liberal encoded with comic book references to secret knowledge and superhero powers, K. Jeru Davis's first major release in nearly four years harks back to a primordial age of Heretofore basics, and there's no question that he's got the lyrical flow and gaurd studio talent to pull it off.

Jeru's not the kind of artist who needs to rely on bloated production values or his old vinyl collection to make his case. Placing rap outside of history's established boundaries and beyond the immediate commercial demands of the industry, he boldly speaks of purity and survival. The will to innovate, however, remains sadly lacking. Even when aided on the mic by Muzumvel's verbalizing shins but rarely dazzles. Too busy staking out traditional ground, he leaves himself little time for the new. The bars are solid and the samples functional, but there's nothing startling going on here. It will be nice to report for example that "Bitches Wit Dicks" is a celebration of the playful smouldering attitude crossdressers of either sex can bring to gender issues, but you don't need Camille Paglia to tell you it isn't. The track even cuts in that first-sounding "switch" snare dating from Too Short's late 80s heyday.

Such predictability is made doubly dreary by the sexual innuendoes of "I'll Be Your Safe Sex" in which Jeru, flits over into sharp-tongued fantasy freefall to describe how once he shared a girl's sexual favours with Michael Jackson. The resultant baby can't possibly be his, Jeru argues, because he always wore a condom. "This story a 100 per cent true," he proclaims in a fly vocal aside, "word to Bill Clinton's mother." However well intentioned, Jeru's desire to purify and conserve rap's essence ultimately threatens to drain its vitality off into a ritualized series of familiar gestures and endless repeated platitudes. Like one of

those rewilded marching bands that participate in New Orleans funeral processions, Jeru could find himself participating in a grim but meaningful act of interest only to curious tourists. There's more to this game than a coffin full of dreams.

**KEN HOLLINGS**

## Guy Klugevsek

Transylvanian Softwax

STARK/ALTO (CD)

The unifying theme of Guy Klugevsek's album, he writes, is that the compositions are based on popular and folk music from around the world. It's certainly an amazingly diverse collection, which also reflects the range of composers and improvisors the accordion has worked with — John Zorn, Anthony Braxton, Avni Lucier, Pauline Oliveros, Fred Frith and Bill Fissell are just a few.

For a long time the instrument has had a dodgy reputation. The renaissance of the accordion family is due to South American masters such as Astor Piazzolla and Dino Saluzzi, not to mention Klugevsek himself whose approach is altogether more postmodern. These musicians have found a way of playing the instrument which though it doesn't escape the cheesiest light music associations of the '50s/60s/70s — and perhaps wouldn't want to — has transformed its possibilities.

In stating that Klugevsek's tone is not as beautiful as that of Argentine maestros like Saluzzi, it's important to note that they play bandoneon, a member of the accordion family but not an accordion, while Klugevsek plays a free bass accordion. On the latter, the lefthand buttonboard contains no preset chords, and is free to act as equal melodic partner to the keyboard, thereby helping to overcome the lack of tonal variety.

The compositions by Klugevsek all date from within the last ten years or so. The title track is a quite dissonant piece based on Hindu wedding music. The variations of "Vlasy Rose" originate their composer tells us in two traditional accordion melodies from Madagascar. The variations are improvisatory though presumably not actually improvised. "Bandoneons, Bass And Bow (Lewins)" is an elegiac piece dedicated to Astor Piazzolla. Elsewhere, no nodding to John Zorn's "Wood Runner" is a tour de force of cut-and-paste cartoon music, while William Duckworth's intriguing "Slow Dancing In Yugoslavia" really is as the sleeve note says, indeliberately ethnic. The album concludes with Fred Frith's "Morphomation Polka" so-called because Frith claims not to know what a polka is. Klugevsek may be a stylistic chameleon, perhaps, but he's an elegant and engaging one, and this is a thoughtfully engaging album.

**ANDY HAMILTON**

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# Various Artists

Ohrm: The Early Gurus Of Electronic Music: 1948-1980

ELIIPS ARTS 3670 3XCD

Ohrm: The Early Gurus Of Electronic Music is probably the finest survey of the electronic avant garde available. The compilers have managed both to offer a sampler of diverse and contradictory trends in electronic music, while at the same time creating a treasure trove of hard to find and previously unavailable gems. Best of all, Ohrm should prompt a re-evaluation of every reductionist theory that has ever been applied to the history of electronic music.

To the technologists, electronic music appeared to offer scope for the serialists to apply their control addition to yet more of the sound field, for composers to do away with unreliable and expensive performers and to create sounds that had been imagined but never before performed. Nonetheless, the advent of electronic music coincided with utterly contradictory trends in composition. Steve Reich's wheezy, whooping process piece *Penultimate Music* uses the simplest of electronics (microphones, loudspeakers and feedback) to produce something all but independent of the composer, while John Cage's rapid-fire tape cut-up classic *Williams Mix* was an earlier attempt to disentangle intention from sound in music. For others, including Terry Riley (represented here by a gorgeous *Poppy Nocturne* extract), Clara Rockmore (on theremin) and Oliver Messiaen (ondes Martenot), electronics offered the ability for performers to enter entirely new areas. A raucous free improv contribution from Musica Elettronica Viva is a further welcome antidote to the classic image of the electronic avant guard while-coated in the lab.

Ohrm also defies the idea that there's a huge gulf between arch-rationalists and sensualists throughout much of the history of the avant garde. The music of computer pioneers such as John Chowning (Stria's

bell-like shimmering), Paul Lansky (the gentle *Six Fantasies On A Poem By Thomas Campion*) or even the highbrow operatic antics of Milton Babbitt (*Phaenomena*) are ultimately admirable for the facility of their sound, not for the structures that generate it. Vladimir Ussachevsky's *Wireless Fantasy* may be the product of an academic, but its shorthand and wireless code signal samples wouldn't be out of place on an album by Deafinition or Scanner today.

The West's increasing openness to 'exotic' music has progressed hand in hand with technological development. The music compiled on Ohrm owes as much to the reassessment of the rhythms and tonality of globally disparate music as it does to the invention of oscillators or microchips. For many of the composers of the modern era, electronics offered the opportunity to bring this into their work as more than mere exoticism. For Riley, electronics offered the ability to escape well-tempered Western tonality, while Jon Hassell may have shared an interest in Indian music but came up with something altogether drier and more limped on "Before And After Charni" (which adds little to Hassell's other "Fourth World" music). Iannis Xenakis's use of Japanese instruments as a source for the stubborn granularity of *Hilo-Hano-Ma* might be just a convenient token, but in the context of his truly radical rejection of the Western tradition's unrelenting linearity, should be seen as something more. Holger Czukay bucks this trend somewhat with his Rolf Dammars collaboration, "Beer-Woman-Song" — undeniably and gloriously beautiful, but a very much imposing a perhaps unwarranted poignancy onto the Vietnamese source material.

One of the major musical revolutions which electronic music could not avoid was the increased primacy given to careful listening. Even Cage's early experiments such as *Williams Mix* demonstrated an openness to sound instead of mere notes — the triumph of musical sensuality over music as language. Pierre Schaeffer had already taken a leap from cinema

with his *Etude Aux Chemins De Fer*, a simple-minded collage of train recordings which now sounds more interesting for its introduction of mechanical looping than for its entirely non-instrumental sound source. By the time of the creaking door in Tod Dockstadter's highly emotional *Apocalypse* a decade later, cartoons had rendered formalism in 'sampling' irrelevant — listeners' ears were adjusting fully to the post-musical soundworld. Luc Ferrari's audio-realist environmental snapshots (*Musique Promenade*), David Tudor's material-scientist simulation of acoustic ecology (the splendid *Rainforest I*) and Brian Eno's excellent virtual soundscapes ("Unfamiliar Winds" from *On Land*) all offer utterly divergent uses of natural sounds which explored the new freedoms of electronics and tape.

Electronic music also saw composers begin to escape the confines of the performance situation, ultimately developing fresh horizons for the field of sound art which would otherwise have remained limited to sculpture. Sound began to address architectural concerns, issues of development in space rather than time. Sound art could use electronics to relocate unlikely sounds out of doors, or to explore the resonant frequencies of interior space, all the time moving away from the idea of a 'musical piece' limited in duration. A situation slowly arose in which creative sound could do away with the hindrances of 'music' and all its baggage. Aven Lucier's interest in dry but beautiful explorations of sound's physicality as a waveform is illustrated here by an excerpt from the marvelous, droning *Musique On A Long Thin Wire*. An extract from La Monte Young's (all but unavailable) superb two-tone *Drift Study* will be largely inescapable to listeners unwilling to explore a sound field which varies primarily in space. A previously unreleased edit from *Living Sound, Potent Pencil* by Marjanne Amacher may be a shadow of the original multi-room experience, but remains impressively dense and layered.

The 96 page booklet that accompanies the compilation is a worthwhile companion, with commentaries on all the tracks from the composers, their friends or sometimes students. Brief histories of significant studios and groups (IRCAM, Sonic Arts Unit, Columbia-Priestman, IRCAM), and more philosophical reflections by various avant music celebs (Thurston Moore, DJ Spooky, David Toop, et al) offer a mixture of valuable background and sources of imitation. Ohrm is not without its peculiarities and omissions (an inevitable casualty of licensing and bureaucracy), and most of the material is available elsewhere. But who genuinely has a library filled with obscure by Edgar Varese, Ussachevsky, Joji Yuasa, Charles Dodge, Jean-Claude Risset or Herbert Eimert, not to mention the otherwise unavailable material from Young, Amacher, Hassell, Richard Maxfield and others? This compilation is a tremendously useful and integrating archive, an indispensable resource for both the enthusiast and the merely curious.

BRIAN DUGUID

**Maher Shalal Hash Baz**  
*From A Summer To A Summer*  
 (An Egypt To Another Egypt)  
 SOGMAH 1 CD \$12.98

**Maher Shalal Hash Baz**  
*Souvenir De Muzine*  
 MAJORETTE 1 CD

"Tuning," asserts MSHB member Tom Kudo "usually takes the music before you play it." Elsewhere he judiciously compiments a session player's drumming on the 1993 track "Medicine For The Melancholia" with the remark, "not bad for the enemy." Anal types who like their music tidy round the edges should bail out now. To say that this Japanese acid rock collective finds the severe regimen of conventional musical practice somewhat restricting only tells the half of it. Comped from their new CDs and cleaned-up cassette-only releases by Kudo and The Pizazz, Stephen McRobbie for the latter's new imprint McGobbie, *From A Summer To Another Summer* meets the fascinating journey undertaken by these traveling players across two decades and around the outer edges of rock, folk, jazz and improv culminating with a live take of a key MSHB tune, "Unknown Happiness," recorded in Glasgow last year.

No drum machine and piano player herself Kudo formed Maher Shalal Hash Baz with euphonium player Hiro Nakase after meeting on a building site in Tokyo at the beginning of the 1980s; their musical relationship apparently cemented by a mutual respect for Mayo "Red Crayola" Thompson's arrangements of rock rhythm guitar and woodwinds. This decidedly lazarine core instrumentation is indicative of the peculiar musical vein Kudo has nurtured ever since. The euphonium van-pitches their music somewhere between a Balkan gypsy litras outfit and street corner Salvation Army band from Guyana and Davis' incidentally the name of one of Kudo's side projects: Syd Barrett, the Jimi sons of Gordon Breagway and Melo Rato, Pascal Comelade and the sadly defunct Red Of Holy Joy are other perhaps more useful map references in trying to locate MSHB than the usual roll-call of Japanese psych groups.

The album's tone is set by the opening half summer folk version of "Unknown Happiness," plus seven other tracks from their highly collectible 1980 CD *Return To Root Music* (Orf 1986) which showcase a range of buzzing melancholy creeping with fragile vocals, euphonium, trilling guitar and lazily tapped drums. The earlier 1980-85 cassette-only material is where Kudo's non-inclusivity approach really gets dividends in the way his ropey tunings flow as some inspired, unpredictable interplay between his lazarine electric guitar and the alternately heartbreaking and achingly beautiful contributions of a Gato Barbieri-style saxophonist.

The latest recording, *Souvenir De Muzine* is shared between the wonderful ramshackle

line-up responsible for the Glasgow take of "Unknown Happiness" and some of Kudo's slacker fingered piano improvisations. Though going at first, but let them run while and Kudo confirms his uncanny knack for unlocking some universally poignant memories.

BIBA ROFF

**Wim Mertens**  
*Poema*  
 ES DISQUES DUTRICHES 1 CD \$12.98

**Wim Mertens**  
*Kers Weerom*  
 NRS DISQUES DUTRICHES 1 CD \$12.98

**Wim Mertens**  
*Deccorum*  
 ES DISQUES DUTRICHES 1 CD \$12.98

To say Wim Mertens is big in Belgium sounds like either damning the man with least cause or wringing him out altogether with a Broadway line of overkill. Well, he is even if this audacious output — 22 albums in 20 years — have never got the international attention that his soundtrack for Peter Greenaway's *The Belly Of An Architect* enjoyed. One reason for this may be that Mertens's music, like between two stools, too accessible for the high art crowd too diverse for the others who'd rather have the rough-hewn textures of someone like Michael Nyman.

Composed and recorded between 1995-99, these seven discs — a part of the tripartite *Kers Weerom* cycle — are vast, interlocking instrumental affairs which, in their turn refer to his earlier works — specifically *Go Van Nuts* and *Air Dingo*. A series of short pieces, each one deceptively simple and lyrical in mood should certainly dispel any lingering doubts about his persuasion left them him. His 1980 rock album *Minimel Music* it sounds like Mertens has spent the intervening years absorbing Debussy, Satie and various folk styles, there's a warming moment in the cycle's third second section when cello and double bass produce a drone reminiscent of an accordion. The second section, all three CDs of it, offers greatest variety. Using an ensemble that heavily favours strings and woodwinds, these three discs are full of false endings and pauses in their progress. This is spacious, thoughtful music.

The first and third sections *Poema* and *Deccorum* have an altogether different feel. Scored for Mertens's solo piano, *Poema* starts promisingly full of cadences and bold, quick flickers in the melodies, but the overall effect is of overripe tact. They nurture uncharitable thoughts about Nyman's score for *The Piano*. *Deccorum*, for guitar and woodwind too, makes a strong statement in its lush lines until some rather rapid parts — for truncated squeaking clarinet and guitar — begin to cloy. In all not unobjectionable in its splintered nature, but never totally engaging.

LOUISE GRAY

**Phil Minton Quartet**  
*Up Umca*  
 BLUE TONES ARTISTS CD

There must be a bit of the underdog in all crics. Why else, then, inundated as we are with so many people making so much music — good, bad and undifferentiated — around us, would we get such special pleasure from unearthing a choice piece of previously unknown material from the past? Consider, for example, this marvellous bit of small group jazz recorded at the Swedish national television studios in 1959. It's not notable because it adds to our historical perspective and knowledge of the participants, but more than just an artifact, it's especially worthwhile because the music is so alive and engaging.

Most contemporary improv fans know of Phil Minton as the man with as many voices as Lon Chaney had faces, articulating William Blake poems in *Face*, Westbrook's archival settings of Lewis, Brecht or women's anthems in *Out* with *Patience* or *Wendy*, filling in *John's* *Fireworks* while with his own quartet or evening *Impromptu* vocalists to dramatise free improvisation. Well, there's a bit of the latter here in burgeoning form when Minton howls wordlessly like *Leon Thomas* contemplating that the pub is closing. But when he sticks to his section-headed trumpet, he offers confident concert playing. His solos on "Day" and "Blue Reading I" pump icy intentions, or spit sparks with scuzzed-valve textures.

But of Minton's instrumental work is a surprise: the rest of the group is a real discovery. *Domestic* *Sleazebag* is nicely understated and sensitive to group dynamics and details, while *Salest* Lars Gunnar Gunnarsson strides with purpose and adds appropriate fits and responses. Also *Salest* Lars Gunnar Gunnarsson is so good, though that one wonders how he could have been overlooked all time. In its loosely total control, he fashions extended lines with the finesse of a Kontz, the ferocity of a Tchicoma and the exuberance of a Shezo. (Remember this is the late 60s.) His slippery-lyric chromatic variations on "Blue Reading I" and "Blue Reading II" — a shaggy approach to the blues as to New York Contemporary 5 — and *The Art Ensemble Of Chicago* — inhibit realism and personality.

ART LANGE

**Tisziji Muñoz**  
*Alpha-Nubla* — The Prophecias  
 ANAPH MUSIC ARTIST'S CD

For many, the name of New York-born Puerto Rican guitarist Tisziji Muñoz will be unfamiliar so perhaps a brief summary of his career is in order before examining the 2001 144mi recording. Muñoz boasts an impressive solo discography that dates back to 1971 together with a performance record that includes playing alongside such former John Coltrane sidemen as Pharoah Sanders, Rashied Ali and saxophonist Elman Sanders. His first love, however, was the drums, an instrument he

mastered (despite suffering nerve damage to his wrist — enough to be recognized as a prodigy with a promising future career as a great Afro-Cuban drummer. While serving as a percussionist in the 440th US Army Band he became interested in jazz through the music of John Coltrane and began to study jazz harmony. He also decided to learn how to play the guitar and it was this instrument that he would eventually adopt. After leaving the army in 1969, he spent five years playing guitar in Canada in a variety of roles, before finally returning to the US. On his return he devoted himself to being a full time jazz musician playing alongside Pharoah Sanders and recording with drummer Elvin Jones and bass player Art Davis. At the same time he became spiritually connected to Tibetan Buddhism as well as showing a very interest in the Esoteric Teachings of Rumi, Tawhid and J. Ron Hubbard's Dianetics and Scientology studies.

Muñoz would later found the Illumination Society, dedicated solely to publishing and distributing his own spiritual, metaphysical writings and teachings. It is through this organisation, and his Anaph Music label and production company that he advances what he describes as: Heart-Music, from his spiritual centre in Schenectady, New York.

All of which only really starts to make sense once you actually experience his guitar playing first hand and *Alpha-Nubla* — *The Prophecias* is a prime example of how Muñoz's Heart-Music, both here his complex and elaborate electric guitar compositions are set within the framework of a band session — comprising John Lockwood, Brandon Kernery, Don Pate and Bob Pines. All of whom are put through their paces in order to keep as he launches off into some imaginary cosmos. Think Jimi Hendrix setting the guitar controls for his new ring sun. John McLaughlin turning his inner mounting flame full on, or being on board Coltrane and Aki Kaurismäki's *Immortal*. Space journey for real, and the total impact of the guitarist's energy, commitment and spirituality comes crashing through like some rogue asteroid linking such ambitious titles as *Wedding The Red Of Truth* — *Berg Weledia* *The Holder Of Indestructibility* and *Cosmic Ovulation* — *Preparation For AWAKENING* into *Berg Infinity* are a series of intelligently constructed electronic soundscapes, each of which sets the intended cosmically freefloating mood while at the same time, preparing the listener for the next screaming guitar onslaught.

Despite the somewhat off-putting outrageous cult mumbo jumbo that surrounds Muñoz and his music, *Alpha-Nubla* is a remarkable achievement from a true spiritualist.

BOWEN POONCEY

**Pablo's Eye**  
*Resplendo*  
 ANAPH MUSIC ARTIST'S CD

The reality of this latest mini-album from Pablo's Eye is that there is no such thing as



**John Cale/Tony Conrad/Angus MacLise/La Monte Young/Marian Zazeela**

**Inside The Dream Syndicate Volume 1, Day Of Niagara (1985)**

TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS TOCH CD

This is the sustained tone music that La Monte Young has been supposedly sitting on for more than three decades. The secretly 'saved' sounds that would be recognised as one of the unheard keystones of American minimal music, as well as being the testbed for part of one of America's most influential rock groups, The Velvet Underground. To say that this is an important recording is an understatement, as its release (whether approved by Young or not) finally draws back the heavy curtain of mystery that has, until now, separated the world from the 'Dream Music' that Cale, Conrad, MacLise, Young and Zazeela pioneered together from 1962 to 1965.

This later incarnation of Young's Theatre Of Eternal Music — recorded in New York on 25 April 1965 at Young and partner Marian Zazeela's loft studio on Church Street — found him abandoning the saxophone and giving Zazeela on voice. Their combined drone effecting amplifies the jet engine roar of John Cale and Tony Conrad's powerful, string-driven overtones, while hand drummer Angus MacLise

supplies a faintly audible pulse beat that gently provides *Day Of Niagara* (MacLise's calendar name for the recording date) a rhythmic tram rail to glide along.

Dominating this recording, however, are Cale and Conrad, whose unorthodox 'Dream Syndicate' moniker aptly describes the kind of music that the quartet was making during this period. When first confronted with the enormous controlled noise that they are producing from their instruments, the experience is both exhilarating and slightly shocking. As has already been documented elsewhere, to achieve the sound he wanted from his viola, Cale fixed it with a contact mic and electric guitar strings, and flattened the bridge to allow himself to play three strings simultaneously with equal intensity. The result was to turn a concert instrument into a rock 'n' roll instrument which, in the hands of Cale — who had previously studied classical music, participated with John Cage in a 24 hour piano piece and was, with MacLise, a member of the embryonic Velvet Underground — became the perfect dream weapon.

It permitted him (under the watchful eye of Young) the freedom to create a sound which defied categorisation. Although the music here is disciplined, there is also a sensation of liberation coursing through it: a break from the preconception of how Western music should behave and be played, which would hopefully free your mind so your ass could follow. A similar technique was being used by other New York based minimalists such as Charlemagne Palestine, Rhys Chatham, Phil Niblock and future TOEM members Terry Riley and Terry Jennings, but the skyscraping wall of amplified string drone that is erected here towers over almost everything.

Coupled with Cale's hypnotic, deafening avant-rock viola is Conrad's equally impressive, double-stop violin playing: it is his finely tuned, resonating string undercurrent that gives *Day Of Niagara* its subtle razor's edge. Together they produce the sound illusion of some huge electrical generator, a grinding musical turbine that is forever shooting sparks to ignite the imagination.

Behind Cale and Conrad echo the drumming patterns of Angus MacLise who, along with Cale, was

responsible for introducing Young's avant garde methods to the early (pre-Maureen Tucker) Velvet Underground. MacLise was also a poet, a mystic, a cabaretist, a visionary and a traveller whose personal quest for inner enlightenment took him East, to North Africa and (finally) India. What sounds like the steady patterning of a table weaving delicately through the dense mass of harmonically related frequencies slowly reveals itself, and although MacLise's performance here is somewhat drowned out by the strings, these various traits in his persona still manage to shine through and make themselves heard.

Sandwiched in between are Young and Zazeela's voice drones which, while lacking the amplified charge of Cale and Conrad's contributions, are equally as powerful, spiritually speaking, and effective: a rock solid Just Intonation chorus that works in perfect harmony with the other instrumentation to create what John Cale once described as being "a kind of sense deprivation for all concerned".

A little over 30 minutes later, it shudders to an abrupt, unedited halt, leaving only empty silence hanging in the air, together with a distant feeling of aftershock as reality gradually resumes its grip. As Tony Conrad explains, when asked about the piece, "Among all the Dream Music recordings, *Day Of Niagara* is almost certainly the starkest sound ever cast by our music at its greatest incandescence".

Despite the persistent in-fighting over who owned this Dream Music, which began soon after Young disbanded the Theatre Of Eternal Music in 1966, the fact is that *Day Of Niagara* comes across as a harmonious group project. La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela may well have been the internal driving force behind the ideas and motivation of the Theatre Of Eternal Music, but without the playing skills and invention of this extraordinary cast of musicians — with whom they willingly chose to surround themselves — this incredible piece of music may have simply remained just an idea. That it exists and is (at last) available to anybody who wants to hear it is nothing short of a miracle. *Rejoice!*

EDWIN POUNCEY

at least no unified reality. Over the past decade Audi Liberti has led his listeners on some serious overminds, all assembly armies, through his electronically generated landscapes and his fellow wanderers have responded enthusiastically to both the same space offered and its non-discursive form. And so it was *Realismo*, a collection of seven instrumental and its main part emitted by the fact that the (same) album comes either as an 'ordinary' CD or as one of nine different sleeves designed and handprinted by Vaughn Oliver — that there never is a total picture.

Like Oliver's overprinted maps that constitute *Realismo's* ten sleeves, this lack is a plus point. Liberti's latest collection of

contoured sounds has a misty feel that neither imposes nor makes. The two exceptions are a decisive opening, "There Was Silence Too", and the rhythmic groove set up by "Ariadne On Us". That's just to say the first are extreme examples of soft, strokeable Ambient tracks. The magnetic pictures *Realismo* provides have a wildness that Liberti's carefully superimposed sounds build upon. Maybe it's something to do with Trieste, with all the sonorous romanticists that the word evokes, appearing on one of the 50s-coloured sleeve maps, but whatever, the album is a beguiling antidote to the huge drunks of everyday life.

LOUISE GRAY

**Pan Sonic/Charlemagne Palestine**

**Most Axis Vachies**  
STAGPLAAT NO NUMBERS CD

Like an original chain, the one-off collaboration between minimalist fans Charlemagne Palestine and Pan Sonic comes into the world without a release date or a catalogue entry and only the series's uniform name *Most Axis Vachies* to identify it. Limited to an edition of 1000 numbered copies and only available from the Stagplaat Web page ([www.stagplaat.com](http://www.stagplaat.com)), *Most Axis Vachies* is a strong and uncompromising work deserving of a wider audience. Recorded in Holland's VPRO radio studios in January 1999, its

brooding parabola of sound — developing out of three oscillating organ tones from Palestine and progressively embellished by Pan Sonic's bustling interventions — is an uncompromising homage to resistant. Lasting just over an hour, this is essentially a single protracted seeking of sound stretched to the point where its presence becomes law and immediate rather than musical and reflective.

Charlemagne Palestine and Pan Sonic both draw upon a shared sense of self-delineation that enables them to create a dream state of anticipation. Here at a halting musical rhythm are distorted into a recording background. A few sleepy individual tones add some brief stark moments of life before they disappear. Refusing to resolve itself in any



traditional manner: the piece's closing moments are so quiet they are barely discernable. The day after this recording took place, Palestine and Pan Sonic performed together live at a New Year's party hosted by De Lijnplek at Amsterdam's legendary Ruych Club with the order of their contributions reversed. Unfortunately, no recordings of this second encounter between the two stripped generations of sound seem to exist. Then again, neither does the Riley, which was destroyed by fire a few months later.

KIM HOLLINGS

## Arvo Pärt

1 Am The True Vine

WARPONA PLENDI HP002472 CD

On this collection of religious vocal music, Pärt's engaging style has been pared down to its barest simplicity. If the earlier work also represented a statement of the composer's early "Innominat" approach (a method in which melodic and modic notes ring out alone as beacons signaling the way forward), then the works on *1 Am The True Vine* are enriched by hearing them with this context. Although far less overt here, the innominat is responsible for Pärt's singular haunting and quietly luminous harmonies.

Among the liturgical settings contained here (one from the *Kanon Pokroven* will be familiar), there's a revised setting of the *Besker Nisse*, first recorded in 1990 in this new version — made by two of Pärt's longstanding interpreters, Raul Hiltner (with The Pro Arte Singers and The Theatre Of Voices) and organist Christopher Bowers-Broadbent — has been augmented by the addition of more voices and an organ part based on the original string section. The effect is to enhance the music's meditative qualities and to expose the incrementally slow manner in which the composer develops his arguments. A similar result can be heard on the disc's title work, a setting from St John's Gospel and written for the 900th anniversary of Norwich Cathedral in which the music moves torquously upward to its conclusion. Essentially, this collection presents nothing radically new, but what is

here is described with tender and loving care, and as such makes for an extraordinarily captivating recording.

LOUISE GRAY

## Terry Riley

The Gift

CREAK OR CORK CREATOR OR CORN CO

To date, Organ Of Corti's important release programme of rare and previously released material from master minimalist Terry Riley has been a somewhat frustrating exercise for those hoping to hear a section from one of the labelled works he recorded alongside La Monte Young. With this latest volume in the series, however, the wait is over. *Concert For Two Pianos And Five Tape Recorders* is a radio broadcast of Riley and Young performing together at Hertz Hall on the Berkeley campus in 1960, and it provides The Gift with its grand finale. Unfortunately, out of the four "vertical" Riley tape works that have been gathered here, it is the least interesting. Preceded by an illuminating and detailed but ludicrous description by one Glenn Glasgow about what we are about to hear, the piece opens with Riley's musique concrète tape constructions of what sounds like broken glass being swept into a corner, over which Young adds his own prepared piano pluckings. Short in both length and content, the piece comes to a sudden halt, and after a few seconds of silence, is rewarded with a mixed chorus of applause, cheers and boos from a bemused audience.

The real reason to embrace *The Gift* is not for La Monte Young's inclusion, but for the five segments which make up the title track, where Riley teams up with the late trumpet player Chet Baker and his quartet in an unlikely musical partnership which produces some jaw-dropping results. Here Baker's bluesy trumpet breaks are recycled through a series of loops using two tape recorders so that live performance and recorded sound reverberate against each other to create a trikinetic echo effect. The technique Riley used here was basically simple but what emerges is a complex, hypnotic and wacky psychedelic.

As is *Moscow Mr Isc!*, another 60s tape-loop recording which reflects his experience while using mescoline, and nods respectfully to John Cage's *Fontana Mr Crested* to accompany a performance by the Ann Hapton Dance's Workshop called *The Five Legged Stool*, *Moscow Mr* successfully captures Riley's hallucinating altered state, and drops the listener along the same nightmarish route to the centre of his mangled mind.

The remaining piece, *Bird Of Paradise*, is an outstanding early example of plunderphonics that inspired Steve Reich's tape composition it's *Gonna Rain* and gestures, John Oswald's work in the field by several decades. Recorded in 1965 and sounding remarkably fresh for its age, *Bird Of Paradise* could be mistaken as being a product from today's click, cut and glitch/electronic movement.

EDWIN POWNEY

## Steve Roden/in between noise

The Radio

SANFORS SON23 CD

## Jeffrey Roden

The Floor Of The Forest

THE BIG TREE MUSIC 0102/0903 CD

## Brandon LaBelle

Text Equals CD

ESSEX RECORDS 090100 CD

Steve Roden's is a particularly modest form of genius. Over the last decade he has released a series of wonderfully delicate, fragile recordings, combining toy instruments with environmental field recordings and domestic objects such as bottles and cans. His working methods are often painstakingly formal, but many of his sound sources have a very personal aspect: his grandfather's violin or the contents of his own garbage for example. Recent recordings have seen an increasingly concentrated approach: like this latest release, an 18 minute piece originally composed for radio transmission using only sounds of the radio itself.

Shortwave static, chorale music, cut-up

voices and Roden's own singing voice, all the amplified sounds of pucked battery holders, squeaky knobs and clicking switches. He loops, fragments and recombines his ingredients into a poignant, highly meditative and intensely beautiful sound poem that is at once deeply human but also like the indeterminate, meaningless sounds of nature. It's quiet, intimate and as far from dig it as conceptual art's ever gets.

Jeffrey Roden is Steve's uncle. Possibly his debut recording, *The Floor Of The Forest* is apparently based on Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom The Bell Tolls*, but anyone expecting something full of machismo and in violent opposition to its nephew's modest aesthetic will get a surprise. Jeffrey plays electric bass and throughout this album he mainly sticks to a sleepy, meandering style with occasional bursts of rapping but largely indifferent speed. Notes quaver unthrumily in the air, offering music for a glowering stare. Accompanied from Steve's electronics, drummer Brandon LaBelle and occasional singing vocalist Jennifer Handaway provide a restrained and subtle backdrop for Roden's unrivaled electric mumble. The ingredients are all there for something elegant, strangely affecting, possibly idiosyncratic, perhaps a ponderous, Lonesome Mazurka. Commensurate with subtle electronic tones. Unfortunately, Roden is no prodigy in his instrument and *The Floor Of The Forest* never makes the most of its opportunities. The music isn't unpleasant in small doses, but over the full album it's simply too limited a modest operant.

Brandon LaBelle shares Steve Roden's interest in the intersection between non-musical sound and conceptual art. Together they edited the recent sound art book, *Six Of Sound Of Architecture And The Ear*. As a member of ed battery, LaBelle has taken a particular interest in field recordings, but *Text Equals CD* is a considerably more hermetic experience. LaBelle's new interest is the mouth and the boundary between its utterances and its signal and its noise — speaking and spattering, articulating and vocalizing. Conceptual art in general tends to suffer from the scholasticism between the quality of the concept and the quality of the art, and while

On the other side of every desert has always been, and must always be... Bay City.



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Harry Smith

## Various Artists

Harry Smith's *Anthology Of American Folk Music Volume 4*

REVENANT 2XCD

When Harry Smith compiled the first three volumes of his *Anthology Of American Folk Music* back in 1952 he set out to cast a spell over America. "I felt social changes would result from it," he explained. "I'd been reading Plato's Republic. He's jabbering on about music, how you have to be careful about changing the music because it might upset or destroy the government." On 20 February 1991 he received a lifetime achievement award at the Grammys in New York. "I'm glad to say that my dreams came true," he told the audience. "I saw America changed through music."

The resonant historical power that the *Anthology* still holds is mostly attributable to Smith's idiosyncratic taste of inclusion. He had a magical way of simply infusing deep inter-relationships between specific recordings of hilariously holler, ecstatic gospel and plantation blues; dividing his first volumes into "Ballads," "Social Music," and "Songs" and alchemically colour-coding them green, red and blue to represent the elements of Water, Fire and Air. The covers were dominated by an ebook by Theodore de Bry (lified by Smith from a book on mysticism by Robert Fludd) of the celestial monochord, a divinely harmonious instrument tuned by the hand of God. Smith treated this primitive music essentially as, though it would reveal all of its encrypted mystery and meaning if its codes could be deciphered through their placement in the proper context. He spent many years analysing the basic phonetics at the heart of these inspired performances, noting repeated phrases and the recurrence of certain archetypes under certain historical conditions — like how many times the word "y'allroad" was used during the Depression as opposed to during the war. Smith took this approach to all of his various obsessions: his beautiful hand-painted films, his collections of patchwork quilts and Ukrainian Easter eggs, his boxes filled with paper aeroplanes with cards noting where each of them was discovered. As he saw it, "I'm sure

that if you could collect sufficient patchwork quilts from the same people who made the records, like Uncle Dave Macon or Sara Carter's houses, you could figure out just about anything you can from the music."

Smith had always intended a fourth volume: the Earth element was needed to stabilise the other three, and had it compiled and ready to go when a dispute arose over Folkways' insistence on the inclusion of a song by The Delmore Brothers about the re-election of Franklin D. Roosevelt. "I didn't like it," Smith said. "So they decided not to lose the album, because it was the irremovable object meeting the irresistible force."

Now Revenant, the new home to the wild ecstasies of 'American Primitive', have stepped in and finally released Smith's compulsion complete with copious liner notes by the likes of Beat poet and fug Ed Sanders, John Fahey and, inevitably, Greil Marcus. Sanders's notes are a particular joy as he relates tales of Smith claiming Aleister Crowley as his father, tossing rare books into urns and rolling in the gutter pretending to have an alcoholic fit in the hope of burming a free drink — apparently he even "got along well with women."

There's been an upsurge of interest in primitive folk music over the past five years, and the CD reissue of the original *Anthology* certainly helped to flame it. Indeed, many consumers of self-consciously avant garde music are drawn to these rough-edged recordings as much for the sonic experience as for historical perspective or any notion of authenticity. Decades of cradle and lullaby have become inextricable parts of these songs, ghost channels that seem to be calling directly over time, a little nuptial window onto another world. We can literally hear the sound of a world that's slowly revealing into the mark of history.

The music on Volume 4 doesn't seem anywhere near as thematically linked as the previous volumes and, with the absence of Smith's elevennotes, we can only guess at his grand scheme. There are less group performances here, more family outfits (Carter Family, Monroe Brothers) and solo performers (Robert Johnson, Lead Belly, John Estes) — perhaps a reflection of the conditions of the Depression and the accompanying rise of an 'every man for himself' attitude as traditional support systems began to collapse.

Many of the performances sound damaged, almost shellshocked. The Carter Family's "Hello Stranger" feels so drained of genuine empathy that it conjures up images of the walking wounded, dead-eyed and staring straight through you offering up their hand out of sheer force of habit. There are some curious inclusions. Bradley Kincaid's beautiful, but comparatively mannered, 1933 recording of the English ballad "Dog And Gun"; The Hackberry Ramblers' "Dance Le Grand Bos (In The Forest)"; and The Four Aces' "Aces Breakdown", both Western swing-styled Cajun tracks from New Orleans. Their placement begs the question: what was Smith trying to tell us? In his notes, John Fahey makes a good stab: "Perhaps that here and there, hidden from the scrutiny of the intelligentsia and the stock market, a folk society still exists in many ways undisturbed?" Or, perhaps, as Woody Guthrie wrote: "One day we'll all find out that all of our songs was just little notes in a great big song."

DAVID KEENAN

Redon bridges the gap with noise. LoSelle mostly falls into a chasm from which only the feathered postmodernist could escape. Dragging in Roland Barthes and Gertrude Stein as inspiration and text sources, LoSelle subjects the oral interior to a thoroughly undisciplined disintegration. He employs the incidental sounds of breath, saliva, humming and occasional speech, obliterating any vague semblance of meaning in favour of something hesitant, partial and fragmentary. All this would be fine if the results were in any way revelatory, or even just plain intriguing, but instead Text Equals CD offers an unrelenting barrage of clunky microphone sounds and inconsequential sonic detritus.

BRIAN DUGG

## Rothko

Forty Years To Find A Voice  
LO RECORDINGS LP 1 CD

Low end specialists Rothko's follow-up to last year's debut literally 'finds a voice' with its first track "Open" which, unusually, includes vocals a mournful cicon and the vast, echoing bass notes. Luckily, the single vocal cameo doesn't detract from the dark, moody atmospherics of the music. There are other departures, however: the sweeping, electronic melody underpinning "Breathewind" and the Ambient-jazz elements of "Six Blue Glow" and "A Whole Life In Memories". The core sound remains Rothko's austere three beat line-up, but these new progressions flesh out the group's skeletal structures. Meanwhile, the fractured, crackling spaciousness of "Dream Of Mountain Air" and the interrupted, knotted rhythms playing off each other in "Pencil Sketch" invite us to distrust all altogether.

On more familiar ground, the instrumental shuffling remains compelling, particularly the ethereal, shimmering layers and booming reverberations of "Us To Become Sound" and the madrigal-like lead bass melody of "A Search For An Answer". If there is a downside to this broader ranging experimental approach, it is how it undermines the strong sense of cohesiveness which permeated last year's *A Negative For Francis*. Such fragmentation may yet prove to be the very necessary process which permits the group to explore the immense melodies and experimental sound textures beyond their now restricting original context.

TON NOLAN

## Michael Rüsenberg

Cologne Bridges Synphany  
ARTISTEL MUSIC NETWORKS NW1102 CD

## Various Artists

Roma — A Soundscape Remix  
ARTISTEL MUSIC NETWORKS NW1101 CD

Roma — A Soundscape Remix and the Kaiser Brücken Serenade are the first two volumes in a new so-called 'Real Ambient

series from Artelier Music. Real Ambient appears to offer a means of reconnecting the escapist and technophile vistas of much Ambient music with a more directly human reality. Both the releases so far in the series comprise music composed entirely from urban environmental recordings, although they are very different experiences.

Michael Ruserberg recorded the city soundscape in Rome between 1994 and 1997, composing the dramatic and fascinating "Roma Modular" from the results. The piece works especially well with steady eddies of sounds and with sharp, sudden contrasts, and its churches, traffic, and people are blended with expertise and sensitivity. "Roma Modular" is included on *A Soundscape: Rome* alongside eight widely varying remixes, offering a broad range of avenues that future soundscapers might wish to pursue.

Agostino Di Scopia, an electronic music professor, offers one of the most radical reworkings, using timeslicing to speed and slow segments of the original beyond recognition, all structured very formally and mathematically. The result, however, is surprisingly informal, emphasizing grants of noise in the city sound that would otherwise be invisible, retaining something of the material's character while removing its fully abstract. "Unstuck #80" is Francisco Lopez's attempt to strip away the representational and documentary aspects in favour of a pure sound approach, but his enormously reworking vast of ambience is considerably less interesting, largely due to the lack of that very local character. Christoph Heberer's contribution is the least successful. His background as a jazz drummer sees him intercut soundscape samples with highly rhythmic melodies, with a banal, synthetic texture. Lisa Kucharski's metronomic sonic staccato is a more successful rhythm-based cut-up, while David Toop's view of the city as paranoic, compressed and alienated also has great individuality. Christoph Kunz adds electronic cables to create a more beautiful Roman fantasy, while others stick to Ruserberg's own montage-based strategy. The album overall provides a thought-provoking cross section of approaches, from the most abstract to the more documentary, and as a result it's way ahead of some of the more polished and uncommunicative examples of the environmental soundscape's art.

Cologne Bridges Symphony is altogether more focused, with no one given the opportunity to subvert Ruserberg's own methodology. Although fairly singular in concept, it certainly isn't the first attempt to create music from the marriage of microphone and massive engineering structures. John Mudd's 1998 Brooklyn Bridge linked up Washington Recording's masterpiece, taking the bridge's live web of suspension cables as inspiration for a shimmering, ethereal haze of sound, which, by dint of processing, virtually obliterated all trace of the bridge itself. Ruserberg's 'Symphony' is a major contrast, with most of the

environmental sounds remaining recognizable. Noises include the hum of wind and traffic; the resonant thrub of vibrating dock plates; the creak of stressed steel and regular clattering as traffic traverses the bridge's girders. If someone were to add an unlikely dose of reverb and delay, much of the album wouldn't seem out of place on some abstract compilation of 'Isolationist Ambient' music. With those effects left sensibly switched off, what results is a far more concrete, far more magnificently depiction of the alien world that metals might experience if they came alive. As on "Roma Modular", Ruserberg retains a very fine ear for structure and for the richness of his sounds. Here he shows an additional ability to pursue unexpected diversions. On one track "Sudbrücke", bridge sounds are combined with fragmentary recital of a text about the Cologne bridges, then superimposed by the meditative address of somebody singing "My Funny Valentine" — if it's odd, it's the address of a visionary.

**RIAN DODDS**

## Giacinto Scelsi

*Yemassee/Anashit/Pesaggio/Le Tre Piazze/Organopon*  
KABLOS KAJUJ 203 CD

During the 1930s, Scelsi became the first Italian composer to engage seriously with Schoenberg's serialism, but in the mid-1950s his attention shifted from continued ordering systems to the inner life of sounds. The *Tre Piazze* (1956), for solo saxophone, shows Scelsi in that process of transition, working his way back to the source of all music. A series of extraordinary pieces followed, having his passion for raw sonic energy and his deep involvement with Asian spiritual and meditational practices, including *Ten Notes* by Hans Zender, who directs Klangforum Wien in these performances, and light on Scelsi's compositional method, impressing on customary instruments while in a modular-like state of heightened receptivity and leaving the notation to others. Zender suggests that Scelsi's music bypasses the ego and "corresponds to a sense of unity and homogeneity that may be called archaic".

That adjective seems entirely appropriate to *Organopon* (1968). Scelsi himself referred to the piece as "the heartbeat of the earth", and there seems to be a primordial necessity pulsing through the rattling harp strings, double bass throbs and tam-tam beat that bring the piece into existence. The shape of the whole radiates outward from the core of Scelsi's understanding that each sound is a vital organism. *Anashit* (1965) is scored for solo violin and 18 piece chamber orchestra. Scelsi has been limited to immolation on account of such pieces, and the violin's gradual microtonal ascent through an indistent harmonic cloud recalls the dense closeness of Ligeti's *Atmosphères*. But Scelsi got there independently, and from another direction, starting at the pulsating nucleus of



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## ***the boomerang***

## New reissues: rated on the rebound

Thanks largely to the fine folks at the cult German label Cripped Dick Hot Wax, the soundtracks to *Grade D Spaghetti Westerns* and Italian sex farces are now hot currency among kitsch aesthetes and non-ironists alike. Now the Italian Dogared label has gotten into the act with the release of a treasure trove of hopelessly arcane

soundtracks *My Delicious Spaghetti!*

**Western** (HED102 CD) avoids the obvious in favour of such wonderfully tried firms as Buoni Funerale Amigos and C'e Sartana Vendi La Razzola E Comprò La Biala! There's plenty of sub-Morricone harmonica and tremolo, but such semi-legends as Bruno Nicolai and Alessandro Alessandroni manage to inject their pastiches with enough buckaroo spirit to make it worthwhile. Nicolai takes centre stage with his cow-squeals on *Il Mio Amore*, always

with his soundtrack to Jess Franco's sleaze-Bond rip-off *Agente Speciale K* (RED 1 Q7 CD). Maybe it's just that he uses a Romance language and tarantella rhythms, but in places this sounds a lot like out-takes from an Os Mutantes session (*Italian Girls Like*) **Eur**

**Forcing Phobias** (RED 104 CD) **Black,**  
**Emmanuelle's Groove** (RED 101 CD) and **She**  
**Had A Taste For Music** (RED 103 CD) tend to  
go more for the wink-wink nudge-nudge. EZ  
Listening side of things, but *She Had A Taste*  
For Music is notable for the inclusion of several  
tracks (although not the legendary title track)  
from Armando Trovajoli's soundtrack for the  
porn flick *Sesso e Moricò*, which was a big hit at  
many New York discos of the period. Of most

note, though, are the slew of **Ennio Morricone** soundtracks unearthed, including *La Donna Invisibile* (RED 109 CD), *Il Gatto A Nove Code* (RED 111 CD), *Una Lucertola Con La Pelle Di Donna* (RED 110 CD) and a compilation of discourses called *Morricone 2000* (RED 105 CD).

An experience equally as dislocating as watching Italians masquerade as mustachioed bandits, **The Ruins** (breakthrough) album in the West. *Stonerhenge* (Kritting Factory SHM5037 CD) finds Tatsuya Yoshida and Kazuyoshi Kimoto doing their Boredoms meets Black Sabbath's "Iron Man" thing. Originally released by Shimmy Disc in 1990, *Stonerhenge* marked The Ruins out as leaders of the Japanese underground with reference points like Magma (plodding, prog-ish basslines, the stop-start changes and riveted language) and the more lumbering end of San Francisco punk

Punk meant something entirely different to a group of New York teenagers calling themselves **ESG** (Emerald, Sapphire And Gold: *ESG: A South Bronx Story* (Soul Jazz/Universal Sound US09 CD/LP) chronicles the journey of the Scorpions sisters

ighbors: Renee, drummer Valerie, bassist Deborah and conga-player Marisol from the South Bronx have projects to the east of the city—1980s punk-junk scene. The group formed when their mother bought them instruments to keep them off the streets, but instead of evolving into a polished female jazz band, E56 created a charmingly naive, beat-heavy, soulful funk that was equally at home at the Paradise Garage and CBGBs. They are best known for the amusing "Shoody" and "UFO," their songs of New York's art-house disco scene, and have since been sampled to death by anyone who's anyone in Hip-Hop. A South Bronx Story; however, sheds light on equally momentous tracks like "Tiny Sacks," "My Love For You" and "You're No Good."

ESG rubbed **Tory Alden** on the dancefloor of the Paradise Garage many times during the 80s. With Feldman now running at all-time-high on the new Afro-Strut label has reinvented four of Alden's 1970s solo albums that have been previously available only as Japanese imports or as impossible to find originals on fly-by-night Lagos labels. Recorded between 1975 and 1979, *Joyously/Progress* (Afro-Strut STRUTAOQ1) *CDLP1* and *No Accommodation* for *Lagos/No Discrimination* (Afro-Strut STRUTAOQ2 *CDLP1*) aren't exactly the drum showcases you might hope for with Alden's name on the marquee, but the music is simultaneously tight and trance-inducing. Raining in the worst excesses of Feb's megamartness, these albums prove that Afro-bad wasn't necessarily a one-man genre.

beginning almost as deep into the vaults, the release of the late guitar pioneer's **Senny Sharrock**'s 1969 debut for Atlantic. **Sharrock** offshook Label Vortex, restoring a valuable fragment of the 60s US free jazz scene. Long considered a highly gifted armorer of the avant-garde, Sharrock was a pioneer in Eastern Japan (AMFV 1290 CD) and a group of fine players, including David Burrell, Norris Jones, Mullard Graves, Ted Daniel, Richard Pierce and Gary Sharrock, with production by Jaume Herberle Pina (Sharrock was a member of his group at the time). While in no way as ferocious as his later Guitar alchemy for Enery, this still has its moments and shows just how far Sharrock had progressed in moulding his electric guitar playing on his hero John Coltrane. **Sharrock** playing the electric saxophone here. The title of the standard is taken from the 1964 film *Of Days in Three Colours, All Black*.

on the dimensions of an organic instrument, as Sonny and the rest of the group close in for the kill. This is a black record in every sense of the word that will hopefully prompt Charly to reissue the Sharrocks' equally wild Monkey Pocke-Boo album, which they recorded for BMG/Actual.

**Arctic Rhythms and Chaco Freeman:** double CD release of their first live recordings. The Ozarkians' *Mid Jazz House* (JHE204-CD) showcases two saxophones with intermittent major label exposure; they are still rarely touring jazz markets. Recorded at the Kansas State University in 1989 and 1993, *Arctic Rhythms* is a superb double, down to earth and its concluding lines show him compelling throughout. Freeman's rich, deep tenor has a less immediate impact, but his solos are subtle and oblique. The latter date has the superior rhythmic swing of Curtis Lundy on bass and Red Muhammad on drums, with Julian Joseph on piano; but earlier recording has the advantage of the marvelous John Hicks on piano and keyboards. Highlights are his beautiful "Awards Love Song," and a frenetic "Chourinho" by Chourinho and Freeman. On "Hasty," Byrne shows his first intimation of the standard from in The Tradition. One of the series of albums for Columbia that cry out for reissue in their entirety.

Perhaps someone should have taken Skaggs into reconsidering their reuse of **The Tape-Beats** *Synthetic No. 3: The Grand Delusion* (Staalpale: \$10.65 CD). From the measured half truths of politicians, snatched up wholesale and played out across sampled rhythms and stonerian fanfares, to the unbelievably pompous sleeve notes, the Grand Delusion never rises above its own rhetoric. Plagiarism.

creative social intervention would make more sense if the stiff, benign stolon was actually worth the effort. Unfortunately, stale platitudes about the state of the nation tend to remain just that, even with some digitally reggied telexes clattering away beneath them. Little is revealed beyond the emptiness an elected president can bring to the language. There's something endearing about the pentecostal zeal with which these peccers have been assembled, but do they all have to sound so drearily uniform? It's theoretically possible to enjoy yourself while smashing the system, you know.

Rich in culture, verve and socialist polemic, *Recommended Records'* reimagining of the original mix of **Hurray Goo** (1975 album in Phase 4 Learning (RHR HC3 CD)) – a period of seeing the break-up of their partnership with Sappo Happy – is warmly recommended. Is this how a socialist utopian concept tracks, twirling through jagged tonal and rhythmic territories, wonderfully nuanced polemics, hammered and chopped upon runs on electric guitar, bass and drums, interpreted by softer organ and windward reeds. Where *Zapco* freewheelled between R&B jazz fusion, and classical pastiche, the tone here oscillates between blazing freeform rock and a more pliant but expensive post-romantic lyricism. The late comes from Dagmar Kruuse's brilliant vocal strains – zealous and belous at once, like a 'youthful Leningrad'. This mix here sounds

generally brighter than on the original Virgin release — Fred Fend's guitar thin and fuzzy, like a wailing bruise — while in places the brass has been toned down to bring out the patterned need lines, or fleshed out in the punchier moments. Still fast, twisted and harshly beautiful. **Reviewed by Matt Lynch, Andy Hamilton, Ken Hollings, Edwin**



**Sonny Sharrock**

#### ACOUSTIC EVENTS

Yamamoto (1954:58) and *J-People* (1958) suggest superficial terms of comparison with Edgar Varèse. Both shared an abiding interest in *Phrygian* eclecticism, programmatically evoked on these pieces. Both deployed voice intoning particles of an inverted language, as on Yamamoto. The word machines used for *J-People* recall Varèse's taste for mawkish instrumentation (both wrote pieces that incessantly gravitate towards particular emerged pitch centres). But fundamentally, Scobie's idiosyncratic voice stands apart from Western points of reference. He died in 1988; his extraordinary music remains largely unexploited.

JULIAN COWLEY

## Richard Thomas

Soggy Martyrs  
LO RECOVERED 118.17

Throughout *Soggy Martyrs*, Richard Thomas's intent seems more focused than on 1997's *Shoes And Ropes Attract Pkitt*, his working process somewhat less arcane. The heightened focus perhaps reflects his increasing popularity as a remix artist: check his outstanding contribution to Liquid's recent hit collection *Unter Anderen Bedingungen Als Liebe*.

On *Marbles*, Thomas enlists a series of collaborators for excursions beyond his trademark eclectic conceits, such as the garage band beset by cosmic interference in "Marxquipped 5," or the Phantom City-styled American groove in "I Will Rock You." These albums' lucid passages emerge serendipitously and often curiously, where audio intrudes as if directly from the outside world into Thomas's consciousness, disrupting private reflections on tangible memories. Similarly, sound samples originate from answer-phones, chat monitors and home movies, as in "Rumless People," which is built around a touchingly specific home movie of a young Thomas waving from a car. Thomas replies the message, card and breaks it down and placed things, detuned radio sisters fluke and FX interference. His interest lies either in the intimacy of the moment, or in the faultlines of mediated friendship. When a

family audible voice intones, "She loves you, she loves you", it's unsettling for the way it turns listeners into intruders in Thomas's world, welcome voyeurs at best.

The closing tracks are more conventionally related. "Ice Cream Fingers" is relatively uncluttered by extraneous sound, its naive melody, reminiscent of Pione, crosscut with the pure tones of a Ryoji Ikeda composition. It's a decisive move away from the personal toward a polished artefact, and a relief after the preceding material. Nevertheless, the abstruse aspects of Thomas's conception beget the most disturbing, bitter-sweet rewards.

TIM OWEEN

## Mika Vainio

Kayo  
TOUCH PONS CO.

The second solo release from Ron Fico's Mika Vaino exists in that hostant space between good order and collapse, where machines start to malfunction and break down. From the amplifier hum, spurring and crackling into vaguely audible half-life during the opening piece, its ironic Finnish designation translated on the inner sleeve as "Connector," is the dry oscillations of "Returning," a sense of subdued chaos threatens each track. Vaino has transformed the sounds of unshredded wires, scratched surfaces, and faulty generators into a hypnotic, melodic hue. "Third Ear" takes a resonating bass chime and allows it to disintegrate into a series of colorless echoes before replacing it with pulsating jittery excitations. "Lies!" is a seething, unsharpened coil of electronic noise terminated by the sudden flicking of a switch. The one word title "Käsi" has also been rendered in English on the CD itself as "Glove." The album's title, "Käsi," in Finnish connotations, gives us a hint of decaying radio snippets or grinning sleep-alo producers. The low-level drums and buzzes of "Tähti," and "Sleep" are haunted by the troubling familiarity of the partially remembered. As one sequence or texture gives way to another, boundaries are eroded and clear definitions grounded over. "Transmossion" and "Waveform" may hint at affinities with the pervasive formlessness of

radio signals, but the cumulative effect suggests what would happen if the equipment Krzywick used to record their radioactivity album more than 20 years ago had been left to fall into disrepair, then powered up and brought back to sullen and begrudging life. Sometimes it's the malfunctioning component that requires the most skill.

KEN HOLLINGS

**Various Artists**

Minatures 2  
cherry red chest165 Cl

the original *Minstrels* unfairly defined the end of the 70s/80s of the 80s with its eccentric selection of largely British swing guitar, post-punk and other left-field motifs. Masterminded by ex-Mott The Hoople keyboardist "Piggy" Morgan, Fisher and conceived as a kind of Duchampian portable museum where the 51 tracks lasted no more than a minute and successfully freewheel-framed the zeitgeist. Roberts Wyatt and Frank Andy Partridge, Quentin Cross, The Residents, Mick Penny and a young Michael Nyman all featured, to name a few.

20 years on and two years in the making, *Minstrels 2* returns loyal to the original premise with another satisfying selection of leftfield exotica – only this time there are 60 artists from some 18 countries. Like its predecessor, it does not attempt to cover everything. There is no dance music here, for example, and generally speaking, Fisher has gone for narrative as opposed to abstraction. Difficult to single out individual tracks, but here are four to illustrate the diversity: Pablo Picasso's "Red", Jean Sibelius's ghastly "The Nerve Bridge", Peem Will & Union Know: John's jagged "Reason Of Hope", and Pionniers' *Druck-Is-Go* "Gnomic".

Inevitably there are some odd moments, the most obvious being the "Rosa

Season cringeworthy and Philip K. Birnson's "Garland Hersch's Cows" insinuating in the extreme. But aside from these, *Miniatures 2* is crammed full of tiny jewels, from both established names (Nyman, Brians, John Paul Jones) and the frankly obscure (a 1912 cylinder recording by the Armenian Komitas Varadapet anyone?). Either way, it's a fine

Contribute to eccentricity, conciseness and variety  
Oh, and damned good editing

DAVID BLUMETT

**Various Artists**

Widdflowers: The New York Loft  
Jazz Sessions

HOWARD SACKS, 408 2043 7800

originally issued as a live LP series in the late 70s, *Milestones*. The New York Live Jazz Sessions documented a 1976 Studio Rivbea festival that presented several sub-generations of jazz innovators: Monk acolyte Randy Weston, Dizzy associate Ken McIntyre, Rivbea progeny Sam Rivers, members of the Westcoast AACM and BAFJ collectives and a 21 year old Californian called David Murray. The appearance here of these latter artists confirmed what many had been rating about for a decade — that mid-60s live musicians like Monon Brown, Dave Burrell and Andrew Cyrille (all of whom leave ensembles in this way) were part of an ongoing continuum, not a one-shot revolution.

Although Anthony Davis's ascendancy as a composer was well years off in 1976, a few tracks lay out the coordinates for his future: a seductory, not the least of which is the pursuit of "lost" notes. 61' is performed by trumpeter Leo Smith's New Detroit Art Ensemble. Davis's transformation of a pseudo-mathematical theme through a sequence of progressively abstract sound events is really only matched here by Roscoe Mitchell's epic "Dant," an episodic work that deconstructs materials ranging from rolling minimalist figures to quiet ambient monotonies. While the excerpt from Anthony Braxton's "Composition 61" has memorable moments—particularly his reflective alto exchange with Davis, who has yet to be credited for his performance—as removal from a set-long piece strips it of its structural attributes.

In hindsight, it's disheartening how *Willow* reinforced the old jazz stereotype of long-winded solos. Tracks like Julius Hemphill's aptly titled "Persuade" and Air's thrilling, spry "USD Dance" give little to no clue about the impact Hemphill and Henry Threadgill were making as composers, though the latter succinctly explores Air's instant celebrity upon hitting New York

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# the compiler

New compilations: reviewed, rated, reviled

**F**or many barely-there electronic discopops from Tetsu Inoue, Kim Cascone, Cornelius, Richard Chalker, Goem and Debarge among others: **32k** (12k, 12K100) CD is the latest mess from Taylor Deupree's New York-based microcosmic label. This rather good if a bit willowweird limited-edition compilation is strictly for aesthetic asides who think that Chan Reacion or al. ornamental, happy Rastan-Noton offers too much pleasurable and Mike Paterson is just too straight-faced.

There has always seemed like the younger sibling of its fellow Vietnamese label Saboteur but on the evidence of **Leone Compilation** (Japon D10 CD) it is a more daredevil. Hereby: Nonetheless, the music is based on unimmediately cold and repetitive rhythms infused with a wicked sense of humor. Much of the visceral late-night Techno combines the best qualities of punk with those of dub: throw out convention, keep a simple and slowly introduce new layers of rhythm and sound. Six tracks are from 1996-97, but far more interesting are new contributors from M. Soelner, Jon and Prof., all of them more downbeat while still evoking the production methods and sound of the earlier tracks.

**Out** dunks about on **The Button Down**

**Prod Of Daniel Bell** (Tresor 142 CD) volume four in the Gibbs Mix series. An album of Riche Hawtin's Plus B label Detroiters Daniel Bell follows Blake Baxter Rick and Mija in going on the minimalist good foot, clearing up the dancefloor with the help of some smooth House and coming Techno grooves from the likes of Herbert Thomas Brimman and The Tellurians. The funniest character and Naget of Bell's own: "The Wild Life" sets the mood just askew enough for anything to happen from Herbert's dub interventions on The Stearns flickering "Dais. Brimman Bawler" and the stately lounge stylings of Monro's "High Life" to the Black Power rhetoric of Shale's "Dearest State Of Mine." Designed to be listened to with your head on one side and half a smile on your face.

**Substance 2** (Sub Rosa/Quartemus SR180 CD) could probably wear the grin of the Chevre coat of face. Even though one track features the esteemed editor of this rag on percussion, this is a collection of largely unknown, heard-a, all-behind, usual suspect bachelors from the electronic wing of the Sub Rosa empire. There are some brightly spiced "howlers" To Rococo Rot's jointly collaboration with Tone-Rec. Myrthopon's Ensembles bring a Tasty Chocographier, and Richard Thomas's spooky "Ase Me Phiza 2."

Similarly sammy, but a bit brighter, is **The**

**Sound Of Cologne Zwei** (Sound Of Cologne Records, No Number CD) With tracks from House Of Mars, Gas, Air, Leslium, Nonplace Urban Field and Bolo Bolo, this features some of the most exciting artists working in electroonica. The problem is that they are surrounded by seemingly interminable examples of that stale, dry German House sound by the likes of Hans Newswaid, Jurgen Raspe, Saiz and a truly dreadful track from Tinkswaid.

Equally regionally specific, but less of a chamber of commerce exercise, **Tokytokyo**

**Breakbeats 2** (NS-Com NS-COMMDS CD) imports Japanese label NS-Com's signature sound from bone-dry TripHop to rather garish post-everything electroonica and as for Utahm sub it, "Someone Jazz" While it's heartening to see "Geometry" use a bit of After shock instead of Aylin's usual in dance music, the music here is put together with a scrabbly aim that's an embarrassing shrunked who doesn't know when it's time to leave the party.

Unlike many of their contemporaries, the musicians on **Super Past Electroonica** (Cross CROD1 CD) not only know when to leave but when to start the party. While there's plenty of grating keyboardness that would turn the most festive person into Sproggy, "Mr. comes up sugar plum fantasy on B524." Sinking evokes the Ghost of Christmas Past on "Chaser," and Robinson's "Pomelo" has a best like Tiny Tim Crotchid doing a jig with his peg leg. Hoyanuma's short-sharp "Estafetas Fossil" tracks are far too humble to signify the lumbering beast of their title, but they bring some welcome desirability and cheerfulness to the post-prozac glaze of too much regressed electroonica.

Toune Koute's literally fermy of elephants ("Toune Koute") is similarly too fed of foot for its title, but the wick, along with the rest of **The Sound Of Senegal** (Nascente NS050 CD) perfectly represents the assignment. Slighty sour music of composition Dakar, such bag names as Youssou Ndoye, Imaad Lo and Babio Masi are unsurprisingly present, but the best tracks here are from lesser known figures. Kaouding Crocos's "Hero" features mesmerizing kora patterns and fierce vocals from a 15-year old Cross Damba Kanoute while "Werente Senghor" from the very great Orchestra Baobab is a singular, utterly beguiling groove from a group too often summarized as a ne-Africanized salsa.

Saturated from Senegal by Mok, the revolutionary republic of Burkina Faso formerly Upper Volta, is best known musically as the home of Faly Ndiaye. This synthpop music from the Lab region

collected on **Burkina Faso: Fanelor**

**Xylophone** (Ocora Radio France C560 148 CD) is drawn from musics of mourning which seem remote from that psychedelic perisoun group, yet it is by no means sombre. The characteristic qualities of the disc are celebrated through the performance of appropriate pieces from a traditional repertoire. The addition of drums generates instant polyrhythmic, while voice singing or moaning accentuates the occasion's emotional dimension.

Less overtly emotional, Klaus Egge's first quartet, featured on **Manveplan 20th Century String Quartets** (Nones B554 384 CD) also begins life as a funeral lament, hence its slow tempo. Egge's pastoralism has a Vaughan Williams edge, but there's a resolution apparent here that sings. While sharing some of Egge's interest in folk motifs, Farten Valen gives his second quartet to expand a full formal statement that has all the colour of a sensual Schoenberg. The much-neglected Johan Kivild appears as the first flowering of Scandinavian melancholy, old-fashioned, but brisk. Alfred Janson — the only contemporary composer among them — points the way forward with a late 70s work that draws on subtle influences such as jazz drums.

A veritable litany of different cultures Brazilian music has always been subject to foreign influences. On **Copacabana** (Capricorn CA2030 CD) guests in horn-rims put on shyness and made the Copacabana with their whiffs and drums in bossa rhythms. More than just a handful of samba samples and batucada beats with some electronic doodling over the top (although there is a bit of that), however, Capricorn's complex tracks from Brazil's electronic underground as well as work from some of its famous elites (Arto Lindsay, Arnon Tobin and DJ Soul Sister). Availing both electronic and key patterns, tracks like Jodo Rayburn's "Central Do Brasil," Suba's MAJ's "Rapido Dardado" and in Project's "Santa Teresia" rescue Brazilian dance music from the bongo ghetto inhabited by the likes of The Weather Corporation and Russ Dwyer.

By contrast, **Brazilian Beats** (Big Bang RAB15 CD) begins with timely clerical party whistles and bloco beats from Pato Heller and Mapeiros At Work and the kind of fiery-muzzing bossa-jazz that's already so cheap and apotheciated that even *The First Show* couldn't parody it. Things soon get better, though, with Show's & Malia's cover of The Heathers' "Dance Me Crazy Funky" and Anna Mazzoli's electro-shocked "Eu Sou Macaê." The best tracks, however, are those which stick closest to standard Brazilian burlesque, like Jorge Ben's gorgeous "Cardinal Carol Beat." Two "Mocote's" singings: "Sempre Sambarão" and Luis Carlos Villalva's tropicall "Me Pêre." Reviewed by Ben Bonhock, Julian Cowley, Louise Gray, Ken Hollings and Peter Shapiro

Cytle wrote durable tunes for his quartet, Mueno, an early platform for neo-jazz tenor David S. Ware, but the edit from a continuous set gives the urgent cadences of "Short Short" short-shrift, emphasizing blistering solos instead. And while "Rainbows" is a solid Rivers outing on soprano it's just one of many recorded during this period.

Self the basic strength of this anthology remains intact, it conveys the optimistic spirit that pervaded the lost scene, which associated seemingly forever with the onset of the Reagan years. The reworking of the New York underground in recent years comes too late for Jimmy Lyons, Herbie Fred Hopkins, Steve McCall and Jeffery Wilson, whose anxiety grips the set, but who are no longer with us. However, the seeds they helped plant with Willkowsers continue to yield rare and beautiful varieties.

**Bill Shoemaker**

## Davey Williams & Numb Right Thumb

Texas Was Delicious  
HSA0000000000

Numb Right Thumb die in the shadows of America's premier city of sugar dreams and faded realities — Orlando, Florida — and a little example of the impact that has taken over the blue collar heartland of US rock. Nevertheless, the label should have tried to drink back and pick up chips just before the prime impulse (at least according to NRT's website). And the love of that lumber-backed and the ratty smear of distortion that has lubricated the American rock machine since time immemorial still lives on, but the structure and approach have been morphed into something distinctly less cozy.

On Texas Was Delicious, their first record, the Thumb come across as a bar band with a weird record collection. Fortunately for them, they get to throw their wacky improvised rock shapes in the direction of Alabama's finest front boys, samurai Davey Williams. Williams is game enough to run with the ball, and it's his ever inventive guitar which provides the jangling, glowing carrier here. Numb Right Thumb, currently in a stripped-down live-in-a-minis-a-theater play and percussionist or bowl soon to be on a mission to meld a variety of acoustic and electronic instruments, here including marimba, violin, sax, guitar and sampler. They are competent enough to keep between styles at the drop of the hat, though manifestly without any suggestion of the grained music chops of a Naked City. Still, at times they scramble back to the security of the straightforward rock rhythms, grateful to be back on firmer ground.

It's an engaging enough album, with some genuinely funny moments, but there's still a hint that the Thumb have some troubling to do. With rock machines, all you need to do is turn the key and go. But from now requires you to build your jingly from scratch. Back to Automobile Construction 101 for another term, guys?

**Alan Crippen**



# in brief classical

Reviewed by Louise Gray

## Peter Ablinger Gnostiques (1 100) HA/NOVA 441 131 CD

Peter Ablinger's 100 gnostiques... named after a particular type of medieval stained glass window but also a method of painting in grey monochrome designed to bring out images in relief... become less unimposing in order that you understand the abstractions therein their composition. Using three pianos, a small wonder of mechanical timing and execution by Hildegard Klib each gnostique aims for a statement of form and transparency. Ablinger's ringing treble note... designed, perhaps, as a guide mark... is enough to draw you to distraction.

## Mark Applebaum The Janus MarkApplebaum (NOVA) 441 131 CD

Subtitled 'Energies in auto plundering' Mark Applebaum's endlessly inventive and self-referential mix album (that one of the 11 is called the 'Narcissus Reflex' says something) turns all those odd riffs about plungerphons on their heads. Actually it's a series of modern music concrete mixes made when Applebaum decided to do some computer hackery on a variety of original works. The resulting Janus of an album sometimes utilizes techniques more familiar to dance producers (there's a disco tune fighting to escape at least one mail) which throws into question exactly what came first. Nonetheless, a very intention of values.

## Clarence Barlow Musica Derivata (HA/NOVA) 441 131 CD

An elegantly complete collection of pieces by Clarence Barlow says as the title suggests was offered up by other composers... among them Clementi, Ravel and Schumann... as a launch pad to explore a series of explorations relating to real-time and harmony. Barlow's elevenets, covering the technicalities are pretty full and should be left until after the disc's first few hearings during which the strange formalities of Barlow's erudite style become apparent. The entire thing, including a fascinating fantasia on a Stockhausen mantra is less derivative than you might expect.

## Evergreen Club Road To Ubiud (HA/NOVA) 441 131 CD

Four world premiere pieces by Giles Tremblay, James Tenney, John Cage and the Canadian contemporary gamelan outfit, the Evergreens themselves. Combining a wealth of instruments... prepared piano, ondes Martenot and harp including the group's delicate approach to creating a new music repertoire is an inspired one. Rhythm and

tone colour are given plenty of room to explore their potential, and the overall effect is neither Western nor Eastern. John Cage's *Natas* (1986) given to the Club as a special gift, is full of dramatic interludes and... of intertwined sounds played apparently on an overturned gamelan.

## François Houle & Catriona Strang The Clamorous Alphabet (HA/NOVA) 441 131 CD

Recorded partially in their laundry closet Canadian clarinetist Houle and his poetic muse Strang venture squeak and recite their way through 26 bits... that old clamorous alphabet... of blank verse and their musical equivalent. Strang possesses a great natural voice... all pose and expressivity... reminiscent of points of Data Bay's molasses tones... while Houle concentrates on a sparse, almost minimalist sound. However, while their alphabetic reorganisation is a novel approach to musical structure, it's difficult to see what the piece actually spells out.

## Kronos Quartet Citaravani (MONSIEUR) 7559 79400 CD

In which The Kronos Quartet, featuring Jennifer Culp as cellist, Joan Jeanmaud's replacement, get to collect a few more lightcase stickers, a Terry Riley work and one that purports to be the original model for surfer dude Dick Dale's 'Misery'. While much of the influential quartet's work is accurately described as breathtaking, this more breathless, both in its sweep and its craft, speeding scales through Romanian gypsy tunes and the like. Consequently there's little sense of unity, although individually there are gems among the 12 (many collaborative) pieces. Recapping last year's performances with the Romanian Taraf De Haidouks, 'Sapo Pempasiku' pits gipsy improv against the more subtle organisation of the Quartet with interesting results but it's still best heard live. Conversely, however, does point in some interesting directions. Ali Jihad Racy's 'Ecstasy'... all structural ambiguity and relaxed strings... and the resolutely weird classical-play-pop for voice-verse 'Miserio Tu', a 30s New East classic here augmented with drums from The Hermetian Project Jones.

## Ute Lemper Punishing Kiss (Kiss 46647) CD

Taking its name from a truly forgettable Elvis Costello song, this is the post-Cosby, post-lesbo-Dietrich album from German singer Ute Lemper. A collection of 12 songs from

Nick Cave, Tom Waits and Jody Talbot with The Divine Comedy's Neil Hannon, *Punishing Kiss* is an attempt to create a modern charivari repertoire of great ideas, even if this stylised album doesn't quite pull it off. A reinterpretation of Weill's 'Tango Ballet' is pulverised by a thumping downtrodden oja Nyman and much of the rest... including, sadly, Scott Walker's 'Scoper'. J... verges on the historic. Cave's 'Little Water Song' is, once the surprise of Lemper's gipsy, sinuous voice has won you over, another cheerfully dour murder ballad. Hannon and Talbot's 'The Case Continues' is one of their better efforts. But fans of Lemper's excellent cabaret album *Im Dacka* (Entente) sensed a few years back might be disappointed.

## Giovanna Marini Requiem (ANACARD) 10405 CD

Giovanna Marini's *Requiem* would sound as good in caves as outside them. Indeed, there's a moment close to the start when a male soloist... using the nasal twang one associates with Sardinian folk singing... lets out an eerily howl, a useful mark to be stuck in a French hole with. But the two-part work is a tremendous affair, throwing small aspects of Italian folk culture (Marini's texts are part requiem, part origins including a secular tale on the Des Jours) into an essentially classical form. But her allegiance is ultimately to the traditional structure and pricing of the requiem.

## Matthias Pintscher Fünf Orchesterstücke (Kiss) 46647 CD

Three pieces from Germany's young answer to Turnage, and by far the most arresting of these half-ising works is *Musik Aus Thomas Chorterson*. For cantabile Urban Malmberg and Birn's Radio 50. This 22 minute music theatre work is a dark, concentrated tour de force with a total vocabulary that has developed from a close attention to the best of the serial symphonies. From 1997, *Fünf Orchesterstücke* combines well symphonic experimentation with the quiet specifics which somehow frame the work, while *Chor*, an example of instrumental 'speech music' gives voice to a rich babel of textures.

## Wolfgang Rihm Musik Fur Drei Streicher (Kiss) 46647 CD

This impetuous work for string trio dates from 1977 and its general movement shows a skillful navigation between currents of musical thought. There are some direct Beethoven quotes, but the overall feel belongs to that of early Schoenberg. Rihm's timber dynamics and tonalities make for some break experiences.

## Salvatore Scialino Infilato Nero/Le Voci Sottovoce (Kiss) 46647 CD

On the first *Requiem* texts as his starting point for both works, Scialino has produced

an intriguing album imbued with a startling variance. *Infilato Nero*... the libretto, such as it exists, is based on the ravings of Maria Modestino de Plaza, a noblewoman whose character was noted more in pathology than paradox... is a fascinating work. Both the ensemble music and Sonia Turchetti's Sprechstimme-style mezzo voice during a flurry of movement and long, tense pauses. The addition of staging (and here the libretto) would make it even better. *Le Voci Sottovoce* (the voice under letters) is based around a series of readings of extracts from epic 16th century poet Torquato Tasso and the choral works of his contemporary, Carlo Gesualdo. Scialino's hand can only be really detected in a fall of notes towards the end, signalling a modern touch. Like its companion work, Tasso's descriptions of a relentlessly made into sound their own directions to the composer, this time, however, Scialino lets them stand alone framed further between the formalities and rituals of the music.

## Iannis Xenakis Works For Piano (Kiss) 46647 CD

When Alex Takahashi was a piano student in 1960s Tokyo, she heard Xenakis's music for the first time and therefore decided to devote her life to contemporary music. The story says something for the love inspired by Xenakis's amazingly precise, consummately difficult, but always vital music. This collection shines with the sheer energy of the works, one of which, *Helema*, the composer himself considered unplayable due to its technical requirements. This is a wide-ranging disc, offering solo and ensemble pieces (with soloist Jene Peters and conductor Charles Peitz at the helm) in addition to Takahashi's three solos. Forget for a moment the complexity of Xenakis's stochastic composition, and just revel in his subtle soundscapes, his rhythms and the surrealism joining syncretic he sometimes craves. The effects are like great atmospheric clouds. Stunning.

## Davide Zaccaria & Michael Rayher Y No Hay Remedio (Kiss) 46647 CD

Do not be fooled by the title *Y No Hay Remedio* (a cello and piano duo which for a moment suggests a pitm cut due to warming up Zaccaria and Rayher's album of 12 short pieces plays into a Debussy-like space in which some wonderfully poignant lyrics take pride of place. Because states its mordant themes on the piano and allows cello... accompanied by some background alto skitters from some strings... to sing its own tune. The title pieces, meanwhile, bring in Gurtel Treves (Saxophone) and Ferdinando Farab (drums) to build a jazz-improv territory that sounds oddly retro. Well worth searching out.



# in brief critical beats

Reviewed by Peter Shapiro

## Brooklyn Truckers Union

**Brooklyn Truckers Union Local 003** ROCKWELL RECORDS  
Perhaps not as wild as Crispen Thornton's previous, stark but engaged *Enon* CD, Brooklyn Truckers Union Local 003 is endearingly nutty nonetheless. Where Kid 606 doeses all over his NWA and Mobb records with crackles and glitches, here Thornton deflates albums of truck driving songs with titles like *Put The Hammer Down* and *Songs Of The Open Road: Big Rigs And The Men That Drive 'Em* with sinister synth whirs and sickly feedback. I know these Duchampian pranks play well in Williamsburg, but what would they think of it below the Mason-Dixon Line?

## Bum Cello Bum Cello EP

CD 100012  
A line-up of cello bass, drums and percussion usually doesn't promise anything other than tubular leaden and end-post-rock thing in its shell. Frenchman Vincent Segal and Cyril Aletti, however, solve post-rock's mind-body problem by posing that momentum is not incompatible with texture. The end result is intelligent, bubbly sorta dense music that is not unlike some of the artists in the *Freaknik* A2M's box.

## Kid Koala The Emperor a Mau Cozaine In Cantoese

WAX TUNE 2010210  
Exhibiting little of the transcendental whimsy that makes his *Cosmic Tunnel Syndrome* album such a joy, this is perhaps a strange choice for a single. What it does do, however, is show that Eric San is a fine musician and not merely someone with a good ear for a kaiser soundtrack. Everything on this line four track EP finds the Kid extracting all manner of sense, mischief from his 1200s, from the dawn chorus of a Piqua New Guinean rain forest to the delectable post-rock side of, well, anywhere.

## Kid Spatula Full Sunken Breaks

PLANET A1 200101  
Although it's all too tempting to say that this breaks like the wind, Kid Spatula (aka Mike Paradinas) actually displays impressive spinster control on *Full Sunken Breaks*. This isn't to say that the lack of flakiest basslines and synth raderies signals a new "melure" sound, however. Much of the disc still sound like a toddler throwing around building blocks in a crib only to be pocked by a sing-song lullaby and a plug of formula, but the clearer production and greater range of samples and textures makes this album

something more than a collection of tantrums. Spatula's prodigious gets channelled into quasi-Gabba tracks that are vaguely reminiscent of Kid-606, and while they don't hit with anywhere near the force of the best power electronics playback. Terrestrial, they balance out the lame jokes on tracks like "Another Fresh Style".

## Mike Ladd Welcome To The Afterfuture

GLASS MUSIC 000810 CD/P  
Of all the voices to emerge from the HiHoHo underground in the past couple of years, Cambridge, Massachusetts native Mike Ladd possibly represents the scene's creative apex. Like his comrades in arms, Company Flow, Ladd roars out of a claustrophobic, urban paranoid production with a stentorian force and the ability to turn a phrase on a dime. On top of futuristic beats that funk like Lurch from the original *Addams Family*, Ladd hectors and hollers, mutters about various conspiracy theories, twists verbal mazes, evokes his childhood and commits venacular homicide. As part of a one-two punch with his stunning influences album *Welcome To The Afterfuture* is a jolt to the synapses that should help make this the year of indie HiHoHo.

## Larry Levan Live At The Paradise Garage

SPIN! 0000020  
In dance music circles it's an article of faith that Larry Levan was and always will be the greatest DJ of all time. As a card-carrying member of the church of Levan, I'm not about to argue, but this landmark release (the first commercially available Levan mix taken straight from the mixing desk of the Paradise Garage) probably won't convince any doubting Thomases. This set dates from 1978, about two years before his pinnacle, but separated from the magical atmosphere of the Garage — an urban oasis when New York really was as brutal as its reputation — a sound system that still hasn't been surpassed, a temple of civility with the charismatic Levan leading a congregation of ecstatic gay revellers who worshipped him and his club as gods — this will probably strike most people who weren't there as nothing more than a pretty decent collection of obscure disco tunes. Levan wasn't a great or even very good technical master, his strength lay in his aura, his sense of the occasion and in his producers' love of (what feature here) when he tailored specifically for his dancefloor. What any heretics will discover, however, is Levan's mastery of the transformative capacity of the mix. I defy any other DJ on Earth to make a

Cher or Jermaine Jackson sound good, or to cut off a track in its prime, as he does on *Changes*. "Angel In My Pocket," without detracting the momentum of his set and entering the discolor for a good in the DJ booth (and as an added bonus for non-Paradise Garage devotees, there's a rare chance to hear a snippet of the Defective Garage anthem, Janice McLean's "Smack Dab In The Middle," which he juggles with Jaki's "Sun, Sun, Sun") to create one of those dancefloor explains you only read about in *Memoir*. It may not be the Holy Grail, but it was worth waiting for anyway.

## Mad Skills Ghost Writer

CD 100112  
Over a loop rendered of Ashkenazies shuffling through the Lower East Side circa 1920, Timbaland's favourite MC, Mad Skills delivers the ultimate Poltro boast, borrowing Jay-Z's flow. Skills brags about all the lame rappers who need his ghost writing talents, and if you're paying attention he names names. On the flip, "Together" is marred by the worst Timbaland production ever — it sounds like he's been listening to "Simon Says" too often and it feels as awkward as *Put Diddy in a Hoopie*. While "One, Two" sounds even more like Jay-Z than Jay-Z himself.

## Mykell Miers It's Been A Long Time

COMBUSTION 000010 CD  
Featuring guest appearances from Insecta from Dilated Peoples, AG, Freddie Foxxx and Planet A10, this could be the perfect underground HiHop record. The production embraces all of the indie ideas, from the Ditted-style relentless guitar stabs of "Do The Math" to the brutal Brooklyn funk of "Wanna Be An MC?" Meanwhile, Mykell Miers calls himself the "Hitchood of HipHop", commits "daddy assault with a jet rap" and proves he's got some of the best battle rhymes around.

## Pharoahe Monch Right Here

RECORD 100012  
It may have virtually the same synth brutality and casual violence as "Simon Says", but this follow-up actually sounds more anthemic. In fact it might as well be the same damn record, just replace "Get the fuck up" with "Where the Fuck is Queens" — but the synths are funkier, the chorus is less clunky and the rhymes are better.

## Quasimoto The Unseen Stories

REDWORM CD  
Left Coast MC Quasimoto may have a slightly imitating nasal voice but in this context he sounds like perfection. Just as Quasimoto sounds like Q-Tip played at about 3/9 rpm, the production by Madlib is a forced, dubby take on A Tribe Called Quest styled jazz beats (if Chain Reaction had been based in the Bay Area it would

have sounded like this). Avoiding the twin pitfalls of beho snarl and excessive abstraction, The Unseen represents just about everything that makes HiHop great in the two triple zero.

## Reelose Can't Take It/Abseence

CD 00000112  
With straight-up Techno as dead in the water as drum 'n' bass, Mator's Reelose pulls out all the stops on "Can't Take It." The bottom end is as expansive as all the best Detroit Techno, but the top end is where all the action is, gliding synths, pretty decent post-coital adoration vocals and a couple of nasty scratch breaks. If only he had put a little Timbaland or Romy & May in the bottom, he would have had a perfect record. "Abseence Of One" starts off like a dub track before quickly dropping and revealing a gleaming flash of quasi storm sound effects and synths slicker than essential oils. Forget D'Angelo, here's your Prince for the new millennium.

## Scud/I-Sound Mortal Clash EP

CD 00000108 12  
When the only moments of calm and clarity sound like a whispering dog being kicked mercilessly by its owner, you know you're listening to the new *Amish* gang. A Transatlantic shatstorm featuring London's Scud on one side and New York's I-Sound on the other, this could be the best *Amish* 12" yet. Scud's opening gambit is an absolutely ferocious round of demolition derby with drums that he like a fist to your solar plexus, Xeroxes getting the long creep beaten out of him and a gummytummy "Don't push it punk!" underneath the mainform. The second track is all machine gun riot-a-ka-ka and disembowling basslines — found sound from the Bible of Phlewo? Scud's final track is a Jamaican dancehall cut-up that takes the name of J.A.'s street sweeper idiom literally and says waste to everything in sight. I-Sound's showcase is a whisper, more uncompromising. Where Scud's beats at least bear some resemblance to Techno, I-Sound's go in several directions at once, where Scud's noise is harnessed and channelled, I-Sound is happy for his machines to go on EST retreats and let it all hang out. The best track here is the third, which uses the sound of someone cracking a rifle for its break. Drop the needle and hear the damage done.

## Tutto Mattio Funkuloo

RECORD 1000101  
Disco pasiche so exact it's hard to be begrudging about the achievement of these two Italian camp aesthetes, Larry Levan, Arthur Russell, François Kevorjian, Patrick Adams, Vince Montana Jr., Choro. They're all here in spirit. It's fun, but never false, groovy, but never cheer- and there's no rory or take Afro wigs in sight.

# in brief dub

Reviewed by Steve Barker

## Alpha & Omega Mystical

**Thizzuz** (350000) CD  
As Alpha & Omega, Christine Woodbridge and John Morrison have been producing a tough post-digital roots reggae, mostly in a dub style, since the late 1980s. Initially their music appeared on their own self-titled imprint before the duo signed a deal with the Greensleeves label. With the latter company taking more of a Hardcore turn, however, A&O are now leading an itinerant life, moving from label to label. Developing ties with the West Coast, A&O's last set, *Dub Magic*, came out on Seattle's Zion Gate. This new one sits in the attic, appearing on BSI, the label based in Portland, Oregon that recently gave us a posthumous release from Bryn Mawrdudd Jones. The are more vocals here than usual, but the heritage of Jah Shaka is still pre-eminent as the duo's largely professional, militant steepers style

## Ronnie Davis Power Of Love

**Let's Record 7"**  
Burny "Skinner" Lee, that most pervasive of Jamaican producers throughout the '70s, has been slowly reissuing his back catalogue through deals with revival labels such as Blood & Fire and on a series of 7" vinyl reissues that include both song and version. Here we have the criminally underrated Ronnie Davis with one of his best tunes, but more crucially, the flip features one of King Tubby's top dub workouts, the awesome "Tubby's Fine Style." Get it before it disappears again for another 20 years.

## Nucleus Roots Nucleus Roots

**NR 0001** CD  
Rock style straight outta Croydon! Paul Lush and his musical associates who make up Nucleus Roots have been playing away for some time in the tough North West England roots reggae scene. They have self-financed this, their first album, which is currently self-distributed until they can secure a deal. Which hopefully will be soon, as these guys have worked hard to produce a fine debut, mixing roots tunes, instrumentals and including with a full crew of vocalists. CDs including longtime Sure Of Anja collaborator Country Raveling, musicians, engineers, and technicians. Singer Moses has the quality of a young Freddie McGregor on the standout track "Skil Here", where the uncredited DJ comes on like a reborn Dennis Alcapone. The semi-digital manipulation may make for mobility when playing live, but in the studio it can make the tunes a little too naked. The group are at their best in the set's closing tracks where they dub it up in fine style.

## Lee Perry The Upsetter

**Meracomm** CD  
**Lee Perry Black Art Singles Selector** (Meracomm) CD  
Sensationally interviewees as two Scratch compilations worthy of recommendation are released at the same time as Dave Katz's delayed but essential biography of reggae's most renowned innovator. The Meracomm set is at budget price and sourced from the Trojan vaults, but together and annotated by a true lover of Perry's oeuvre, Ian McCann. About half the 18 cuts are pre-Black Ark vintage, and the set, invention and creativity are so apparent that even now its controversial qualities shine through. This is best represented by the three shanks — "Cow Thief", "Bathroom" and "Kentucky" — where water flows and rhythms are cut together, tapes rewound and soul has sampled. Pity the subtle reads: "Essential Madness From The Scratch Files", conforming to the usual obvious presentation. In fact, all the stuff on this album is the right side of the line justifiably called genius.

The second set is another from the Australian-based Ascomem label. All of the tracks are the A-sides of a series of Black Art Singles reissued in the UK over the past few years. A few years ago a selection like this would have been hugely desirable, but now the standards have been ratcheted up. The cuts are prime Perry, with at least four of the tunes essential in an all-time top 20 from the producer. Junior Delgado's "Sons Of Slaves, Rasta's 'Wobate On', 'Silvertones', 'Jah Jah Children' and Sons Of Light's "Land Of Love". On the downside, Perry doesn't get paid, since it's licensed from Pauline Morrison and Omar Perry, the tunes are not clean enough (they're mastered from disc rather than tape), there are no notes on what are basically treasures of reggae music, and lastly, but most importantly: Where is volume two? We need the cuts.

## Max Romeo & Tribu Acustica

**In This Time With Special CD**  
**Count Ossie & The Mystic Revelation Of Rastafari**  
Cromakosm Records (RSC) CD  
When I heard that Max Romeo had recorded an album with a group of Italian musicians playing in a lounge-style I admit I was sceptical, but the fresh and open approach of this enterprise is immediately disarming. The result is a set that will appeal to all free-thinking fans of reggae and dub. The material is a mix of

nyabingi motifs such as "Rastafari Calling" treatments of classic roots tunes like Romeo's own "Sopie Out Deh" (a "War Inna Babylon" version) and older traditional material of Caribbean and Afro-American origin such as "Mama Look A Boo-Boo" and "Study War No More". It may sound corny but check it anyway. The acoustic duos are delightful and a light and delicate production avoids all the usual easy dub clichés.

With the addition of musical director and Studio One namoré Gedde's Im Brooks and brats brothers Neman and Ras Sam Li, the Court Oase Group became The Mystic Revelation Of Rastafari. In 1973 the collective recorded an all-time classic of Jamaican music, *Groundation*, released as a triple vinyl set on the Vulcan label. On top of Ethiopian melodies, poetic references, accompanied by live sax, and wild improvisations, the set included versions of Charles Lloyd's "Passin' Thru" and The Jazz Crusaders' "Way Back Home". Developmental, inspirational and fundamental to an understanding of the diverse strands that have shaped reggae, this most influential of Jamaican recordings is reissued here on a budget label. Shame that the excellent booklet which accompanied the original issue is not reproduced.

## Various Artists Don't Call Us

**Intimigraht** (Meracomm) CD  
One might expect a compilation of British roots reggae from the '70s and early '80s to be suffused with a mood of righteous indignation, for the artists who produced this music were doubly handicapped. Firstly, they were living in an overly racist society and secondly, they suffered from the pervasive judgment (at the time) that their music was somehow less worthy than the reggae being produced in Jamaica. There are plenty of tracks missing that could have and should have been included, but this only goes to argue that this should be the first release in a series that is long overdue. Play in Roots, open the album with their ultra-rare first single, "So Perry", and Lion Youth continues with his elemental "Ret Cut A Bottle". But it's the dominating presence of the great Dennis Bovell, appearing under different guises on a number of tracks, which bags the question. Where have all his great dub albums like *Society Dub Wines*, *I Wish Dub* and *Brain Damage gone*? Pablo Gaby's perennial dancehall favourite "Nite Time" makes an appearance, as do Black Sliver's "Stickman", Awaja's "It's Not Our War" and Steel Pulse's "Nyah Wish".

## Various Artists French Dub

**Connection Volume 2** (RSC) CD  
**CD0002** CD

**Djuna** (Djuna) (Hammam) 14 1672 CD  
Travelling through Paris, Strasbourg, Bordeaux and Lyon, this first set covers an

explosion of influences that have taken place on the French dance scene since the early '90s and reflects them back in a range of styles which blur the edges of fusion. An urban, sophisticated feel pervades the affair, which is a co-production with *Cool* magazine. The House-oriented Alienem opens the set with the smooth "Yoga Dub", the legendary St German follows with the relatively old but nicely placed "Dub Experience", and Kayle comes up with a sweet Brazilian dub held together by wishes and slivers of keyboard. In contrast, Grant Phabao and Improvements Dub trend more towards minimalism and abstraction while never quite reaching Rhythm & Sound territory. "Black Vocals", the first track, comes from former Fela Kuti drummer Tony Allen. I'm not arguing, this is a hugely enjoyable and varied album which builds on the success of the first volume.

The Djuna, also featured on the above album, turn out to be this month's top dub tip. Flagrantly violating copyright laws, samples abound right from the start. In fact, Lee Perry enters the opener "Las Flores", which is a stopstart stone killer with a beautifully wrought descending bassline and grolt chant. The second track seems to have a capella duo-wop loop, the third opens with a kora solo before surrendering to a violin, and "Reflexion" captures "Pi yon believe" from the late dub poet Michael Smith and, incredibly, "Don't Believe The Hope" from Public Enemy. The ten minute "House Fever" comes across like a medley of Marshall Jefferson from his early days. The big surprise comes on the closer, which features the only vocal track on the album. "Paradise Jungle" is the kind of reggae affected dance which makes some of the tunes being produced on the UK dance scene sound more than a little lame. I'd be surprised if these guys just disappear without trace.

## Various Artists Studio One

**Showcase Volume 1** (Hearst) 1661-7724 CD

Hardened reggae fans may have owned this album for years, but new generations are still aware of the unbound joy of hearing the music on its CD release for the first time, preferably played at a sensibly loud volume with the bass testing the limits to the max. The seven selections on the original album are bolstered by Johnny Osbourne's "All I Have Is Love", Cornell Campbell's treatment of Curtis Mayfield's "To One" and the lonelines "I'll Give It To You". All ten tracks are mixed with the dub following the vocal in disco style by Studio One stalwart Sylvan Morris. The inclusion of the sublime "Undying Love" by Ernest Wilson will ensure that this set gets filed with every reach. □

# in brief electronica

Reviewed by Ian Penman

**Atan** *Biorhythmus* (JAWHANA 000000) CD  
Biorhythms sounds like a precariously Bionik title and an opening track of close-miked heartbeats doesn't dispel the sinking feeling of "been there, heard that (long ago and further out)" Japanese auteur Atsu Teneke sadly follows through on the warning signs. Each step on his supposedly panglobal cross-genre trip has a little marker identifying its provenance: macrocosmos groove. So instead of hearing things morph and warp, we're roped off inside a sonic cordons sanitaire. Today everywhere off list Gemeel noise interference hops into a "so what?" synth "Adagio," takes a cold through some jho-korma club paces, and taken as a lump, it leaves a nasty feeling of "I can do ANY of this stuff, therefore I'm above it ALL. Atsu's ambience lulls behind his sonic aspicure: a might be more poetic, if he ploughed one plot and didn't try to pass himself off as king of all the idoms.

**Blowpipe** *Epilogue* (HAWKSON 000000) CD  
None perfect. Just Johnson/Get up With Her. Miles Dewe stylings with Mac saddy crackle and phase, which may pass for radical in Jazz Cafe circles but sounds rather old breast to these ears, dutifully and dully "right." One track suggests better things: a cool, nightclub version of "Spacemen 3's "So Hot" duels up one possible future for jazz song. If I had my own midnight radio show this would cue up nicely alongside Louie Austen of "The rest is way Mercury Prize — Woof! Scratching in Jazz!"

**Ian Bogard & Chris Carter** *Caged* (on v) CD  
On a cursory hearing you might misprize this the overscripted meeting of two Old Sixties — dub and Industrial — where route logic trumps roots friction. Give it gentleness, then, though, and the chronic soundings of these two old souls — Chris normally partners, Casey, Bogard has been doubling himself for 13 years on his own DN label (not to be confused with the Benm imprint) repays your attention in shades. The grid may be linear, but the mood is dank and winelovely, fiery, weirdly Brain. Caged has a verifiable personality — "Under-Dub," as the aptly titled closer puts it — where too much nu-dub dub just sounds like Lego-bait homages. RBG's carefully plotted hypnotic bubbles, with retrocesses, resonances, lurches and lurches, it unearths moods beyond most modern players. Catch the way the bassline comes in on the opener "Canucced" — red sun splitting grey clouds

— seamlessly interlacing driftnote and beater trills. Subliminal drip and echo, percussion like midnight syntax tapped out on pipes — an unnerving, claustrophobic soundtrack for that Harry Lime moment when all your shadows catch up with you.

**Ekkohard Ehlers** *Beitruhe* (HULT PLATINUM 0000) CD  
Ekkohard Ehlers — on day release from Autopoiesis — delivers on Mike Plateau's original promise of a music where you can't tell theory from practice, where the music embeds radical notions rather than being a mild supplement to stork overhead notions or (like too much Electronica) just scratches at buzz out and mumbles. I dunno, I just do it! The eleven tracks took me back to 1970s art language — "you're better" my paradigm, man — and the music is as cavernous an act of sonic deconstruction as five heard. Ehlers initiates a quartet with theory by using Yves and Schoenberg as sources for a dark rainbow of curley sampling games. The concept of *Beitruhe* (business/activity) I has rich overtones of both piousness (pushing around, blindly) and memorial haughtiness (tracking back, analytically). Ehlers has created a complex proposition that dares you to get involved in its steely resememodal. More, please.

**Emperor Penguin** *Mysterious* (PONY HY-RAU 000000) CD  
Anyone who looks their CD to Roger Troutman (TRP) gets a book-learn in this man's book, and these Wendy Gay big birds don't disgrace that late-so-funk icon. Not strictly electronica per se, the skawit R&B burlesque of *Mysterious* Pony rustles up a mescaline-spiked gumbo of fluff and Funkadelic-wiggle puns of this is gro-gro fun, the moody solo and EPs are seduction by Kay rather than Krog, and EP's middle place is all squeaky synth-bass, karate chop drums and Philadelphia BPM. "Burn Santa Santa Awaoca" could be Maxwell remixed by Two Lone Swordsman, while "Mythicalia Poni" is the Gap Band with Allen Ginsberg dropped into the juke. Done out of diversion rather than duty, this is funk for lay rather than kids — B-Jane beware of the storm.

**Far East Broadcast** *FEBS* (HUS 000000) CD  
It's probably more careful with their PR — FEB alert us their thing is "by musicians and for musicians," contending that "never before has anyone transformed the moments of nature into a similar abstract musical

shape." Their CD was one gaffe away from being the *Truisme* in a game between the non musician and his cats. (Which would be a shame, because DJ Matsuko and drums sculpt intermittently captivating maps of a phantasmal East, with an especially flywily line in semiprecious, anti-Orientalist humour Van Dyle Paris reports as a post-Dance Age B! (for bedroom) bay.

**Kid-606** *The Soccergirl* (EP CARRAR OFFICE) CD  
Six tracks from 606 on CD6 — so far so say. Hence the Kid's cut breaks his run of jho-in-the-eye nose scores (his one man job to feature in every In Brief of 2000) with a low key feine-grassy valentine. I'm speculating to the max here, but this 18 minute sex-signal state feels like a total encapsulation of an archetypal love affair: from first kiss ("Start") to last love ("Over"), progressing from "Call Me" through the non-cynic, "If My Heart Ever Ran Away It Would Be Looking For The Day When Right Beside You It Could Stay Forever" (less a title, more a misdirected e-mail to the partner "Thank You For Being My Angel"). The letter is key, and a stand-out — a Clustered bullet train update of Celia Johnson pulling away from Trevor Howard. The sound is blessed out, tentative, besant, and it's nice to hear flickers of an alien heart enter the quantum noise mother (no lonely gods, its best). What initially seems slight niggles and haunts like a profile seen briefly on a tube train that unaccountably fits you with major yearning (and all that remains is the compensation of melancholy echoes).

**Pub Summer Pt. 1** (VERTICAL FORM 000000) 12"  
16 minutes of sonic power and saunas from some part of the Glasgow-based Ampoule collective: a canny (and Can-y) meditation, ectoplasmic and naturally lethal, maintained in morning glory and groat dissidence. Pub take their basic pubic on a cruise in and out of hung modulations, thermals goosing the scientist's probe and playing wild games with the wiring — a cross section of storm focused in one molecule at a time, waiting for the drops to burst and onto waveforms to cohere. From grounded rhythm, their light, luscious sound bursts free like the weather balloon in *Wakadudu* that goes by itself with stumpy meteorologists tapping in its wake, the fragile machine, pulse lines of successive waves of burn and relief — its break hitches on, building into a hypnotic anal BPM. The other side of Summer sees a child sitting in — evening light, shadow patterns on brick and glass — in a steely room from Vladislav Delun. It's some sort of tribute to Pub that I kept returning to their original disk, which seems further off the beaten track, fleet and spacey and chic like more measure than metronome.

**Bogdan Raczyński** *Thinking Of You* (SERVICES CARRAR) CD  
I was ready to skewer this little snorefest for his obscure self regard (intensely solipsistic PR notes) and dickhead ego games (CD comes with care-in-the-community snaps of Bogdan blown up to poster size), but these turn out to be clues to a markedness sincerely a comparatively rare commodity these days. He works best when naked, the naked side of the juke is just damned DHR domo burp. The loan is "thick you'd" [sic] is throwaway like a canelid record, its invective funny the first time. There are a couple more heavy-handed moments, but mostly the tone is light and sonic, full of unselfconscious sweeteneries. Like Kid-606, his solitary CD seems to be spun off first love. His titles are mostly unpredictable capricious — the unpromising "But" turns out to be 24 seconds of domestic noise treatment, "Unsatisfied Consumer" is far more skewed than you're entitled to expect — great rolling fire-beats and tremed vox — and "You As An Out-Of-Control Extension Of Me" is an odd, spectral instrumental which proves his control of mood/dynamics.

**Symptoms** *Symptoms* (SWENZZ) CD  
23 year old Klaus Armentz's debut album finds a home on Colin Newman's Swem imprint, and there are times (the last two tracks) when you can hear the ghost of instrumental Wire as well as some of Newman's recent outbursts with partner Malikia Spiegel: a schod cloth out from dubclub bass underpinning with swishes of jagged guitar: peak and magnetic snare. Armentz isn't afraid to admit to teenage crush influences like Smashing Pumpkins, Melissa, NIN — as well as more cool integers like Labradford, Badalamenti, MBV. The control of atmospheres on "All Out," "Revol" and "Tyt," and the rolling, tectonic "Returning Themes" make this a journey across three or four ragdolls. His embarrassing comic book features mainly singers, where Symptoms is vox free, and maybe this made him work harder to sculpt his mood settings.

**Tennis** *Wooden Sweets* (CRAW 150) CD  
New cardboard packaging, new track titles, "We The Cussu Men," "Focus Group, Er Disco," "Innaged Pastries"; but in the end this conversation between Douglas Benford (aka S-Juice) and Ben Edwards (aka Bengel) just seems too nice, exploring a certain holidayhome risk in electronica. I'm sure the hours spent on antique analogue equipment was fun for the two operators, but — really — it's just 63 minutes more of some perentiously sunny stuff for us. Predictable loops, squiggles, shimmers and fuzzies, with no necessary daemon to animate the to-do. □

# Ustad Ali Akbar Khan on AMMP



**ALI AKBAR KHAN**  
Pushing on the Tradition CD

Ali Akbar Khan, Sarangi, Sitar, and Bayan. The album features a collection of his most recent recordings, including a new recording of the 'Raga Yaman'.



**ALI AKBAR KHAN**  
Legacy CD

Ali Akbar Khan, Sarangi, Sitar, and Bayan. The album features a collection of his most recent recordings, including a new recording of the 'Raga Yaman'.



**ALI AKBAR KHAN**  
Then and Now CD

Ali Akbar Khan, Sarangi, Sitar, and Bayan. The album features a collection of his most recent recordings, including a new recording of the 'Raga Yaman'.



**ALI AKBAR KHAN AND PANDIT NIKHIL BANERJEE**  
Singer's Song Vol. 4 CD

Ali Akbar Khan, Sarangi, Sitar, and Bayan. The album features a collection of his most recent recordings, including a new recording of the 'Raga Yaman'.



**ALI AKBAR KHAN**  
Kings of the World CD

Ali Akbar Khan, Sarangi, Sitar, and Bayan. The album features a collection of his most recent recordings, including a new recording of the 'Raga Yaman'.

## in brief global

Reviewed by Julian Cowley

### Akhem The Art of Possession

AKHEM THE ART OF POSSESSION  
Various Artists  
Facing north, deep documentation from southern Ghana of eclectic polyrhythms accompanying spirit possession of members of the Akem priesthood at an annual festival. As the ceremony unfolds, the drumming and chanting intensity as participants redouble their groove and their improvisation grows bolder. These recordings were made between 1993 and 1999, but the editing creates an absorbing listening experience. Informative sleeve notes, with line photographs, display Village Puku's characteristic meticulousness.

### Baul Bishwa With Sense

BAUL BISHWA WITH SENSE  
Baul Bishwa  
The Baul, meaning "madness of God" in Bengali, is a subcast of nomads whose music vividly derives in part from openness to diverse styles. Here in the course of three wanderings, Baul Bishwa presides over this troupe as a certain free figure and these label songs show off. Baul's music designed for dancing, played on drums and bells, sings mantras and flute with warmly delivered vocals.

### Djivan Gasparyan & Ensemble

DJIVAN GASPARYAN & ENSEMBLE  
Djivan Gasparyan  
Few sounds are more melancholic than the duduk played by Gasparyan. The reed instrument fashioned from apricot wood seems intrinsically lamentational. Photographs included with Armenian Fanzones. However, apart the maestro in relaxed mood, as if he's a man who has lost his name to a brand of vodka. Of course yearning is never far below the surface, but these pieces recorded with a mixed ensemble of traditional instruments these welcome light as well as emotive shade across recordings of old love songs.

### Trilok Gurtu African Fantasy

TRILOK GURTU AFRICAN FANTASY  
Trilok Gurtu  
Ray Cowley (with) Doreen Kae Edwards De Carthage (with) and Jaya Deo (with) the group who've created Kulture in 1996, are present in a unique mix, but percussionist Gurtu has drawn other collaborators into the project including Benji Singh. Angelique Kidjo: The blend goes well enough in the overall listen, but Gurtu's music works best when most intricate when in the backing vocal interaction between Sadee Kabongo and Esmarajay Soaso in 'Folded Hands'.

### Takashi Hirayasu & Bob Brozman

TAKASHI HIRAYASU & BOB BROZMAN  
Takashi Hirayasu  
Brozman is a champion of Hawaiian music with a passion for national guitars and a taste for cross-cultural dialogue. His recordings for Yazzoo Kicking Mule and Brozman include his stylistic priorities. This meeting with Japanese singer Hirayasu (who has played with Ry Cooder) took place on a remote Okinawa island. It's a few steps beyond Cooder to these unassuming tunes, accompanied by Hirayasu's bang-like sarinai, with tastefully executed adornments from Brozman. A quickly charming excursion essential for devotees of Santa Cruz baritone and Kona Hawaiian guitars.

### Zakir Hussain Vagabond

ZAKIR HUSSAIN VAGABOND  
Zakir Hussain  
The East Indian musical, known to Zakir Hussain, has extended his activity far beyond Indian classical music, into projects such as John McLaughlin's Shakti and groups with former Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart without any compromise. This soundtrack to a film about a troubled Kathakali dancer is another judicious choice. A fine ensemble of traditional musicians including Ustad Sultan Khan's gorgeous sarangi, does full justice to the tabla maestro's acute compositional talents.

### Ustad Sultan Khan The Legend

USTAD SULTAN KHAN THE LEGEND  
Ustad Sultan Khan  
The great sarangi legend's tunes, some of the most beautiful in Indian music, and Sultan Khan's film Raga is one of its most beautiful. Two of the rarest sarangi masters, this recording has been made in the past, but it's a new recording. They are both in the context of an entire concert in 1990. Vocal models sail over the sarangi's solo role, indeed, Sultan Khan sings on Raga Hishar Sarangi, but the plaintive grace and spectral shimmer of its sound transcend those points of departure. The late Shaukat Hussain Khan provides impeccable tabla accompaniment.

### Yousouf N'Dour Jojo From Village To Town

YOUSOUF N'DOUR JOJO FROM VILLAGE TO TOWN  
Yousouf N'Dour  
These tracks, including a Smokey Robinson cover, completely accommodate rapper Wyckd. Jean Ali in all N'Dour is still making the right moves.

### Michael Ormiston An Above

MICHAEL ORMISTON  
An Above  
Although musicians such as Alan Krauss and Frank Perry have made the sound of Tasman singing bowls relatively familiar to Western listeners, they remain astonishing instruments. Their resonance waxes on tacitly ringing and throbbing in ways that palpably scrub the molecules of the air. Ormiston uses other resources, including Turkish flute and overtone singing, to refine further the shape and color of his deeply meditative music.

### Omara Portuondo Buena Vista Social Club

OMARA PORTUONDO BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB  
Omara Portuondo  
Portuondo's appearance in Wim Wenders's Buena Vista Social Club has given new impetus to a career that began in Havana's Tropicana Revue and has extended over five decades, encompassing tours with Edith Piaf and Neil King Cole. Backed by strings or a smouldering ensemble that features pianist Roberto Gonzalez and Manuel Hiriart (trumpet), Portuondo's music is effortlessly balanced and effortlessly sultry.

### Prusikoukku Mahtava

PRUSIKOUKKU MAHTAVA  
Prusikoukku  
Jugoslavians, a folk-rock from Finland's Ringier, some. With Kangas's obsessive solo solos over a strutting guitar, expansive keyboards and a pounding rhythm section. The mix on this recording reflects folk influences to the fore and rock mannerisms are delivered with a knowing snarl.

### Cheikha Remitti The Sources

CHEIKHA REMITTI THE SOURCES  
Cheikha Remitti  
Remitti is a legendary presence in Algerian music. Her songs of love and hardship set the tenor for subsequent performers. Even when her Turk, lady singer is embodied by the language barrier, her resilient voice speaks defiance and battered dignity. In 1994 aged 70 she started towards rock on Sal Marceau with Robert Frop, but the bravely persuasive accompaniment on the Spanish concert recording finds the postscript firmly on the self-declared grandmother of rock.

### Danny Zamir Sallah

DANNY ZAMIR SALLAH  
Danny Zamir  
Sallah (with) Israel. His confident solo works Sallah with the best of the Radical Jewish Culture series. The title is a break, still word meaning, a kind of euphoric simultaneously relaxation and beauty. Zamir and his strong rhythm section are energetic players able to take a guest appearance from John Dem in their unflinching stride. Ormiston's music is convincingly fused with aspects of Zamir's Jewish inheritance on an outstanding debut.

**in brief** jazzReviewed by **Edwin Pouncey**

**Dereon** Dereon Y Sa Grupo

**Dergon & Laura Cromwell**  
Updatedownload88 AFRO P CJA0465  
NO NUMBER 10

The mysterious Dragon (aka New York multi-instrumentalist Gordon Kruener) returns with two more minimally packaged products: both of which are required listening for those in search of difference. Dragon's *Y Su* Grupo sees him hooking up with three quarters of his old group *Don Sam*. *Cip* Job and accordion player *Ted* Reichman whose presence evokes the sound illusion of David Thomas of a phantom *Agustín* Pablo crashing the session. Dragon's playing is refreshingly restrained for such an underground recording, and his spacious solos allow plenty of room for the rest of the group to make valuable contributions without getting drowned out or boxed down.

Even better is *Upstated* where, when Dorian and Dim Sum drummer Laura Cronwell take their music to the people at Auburn Park during the Second Annual New Jersey Improv and Counter-Intuitive Music Festival last September. The inner feeling that wells up while listening to ISMR 138791 for example is spirited enough to charm the birds from the trees. This recording is further supplemented by two earlier recorded solo solos. On "154" Dorian tackles a balloon to produce a cloveleaf Carl Orff sound while on "4K5" he applies his low breathing technique to the classic, overlaid with some blowtorch staccato snarl, drawn from a sawhorse radio, which gradually forces his playing to intensify before cutting out into total silence. If as some may hastily assume, Dorian is nothing but a glib he's a bloody good one. Anyway isn't that what they used to say about Sun Ra? Go Laura

**August Fernández Trio** One Night At The Joan Men

Foundation, whose success is inspired no doubt by the surreal soundscapes in which they recorded. pianist Fernandez, bassist William Parker and drummer Susie Suh pull out all the stops to produce a series of powerful improvisations equal to the energy with which the late artist filled his wild, colour splashed canvases. This is one hot date where each member of the trio is completely committed to what they are playing individually without taking their ears off each other for a second.

**Bill Frisell** Ghost Towns HOME/SUCK  
1995, CD

Garfunkel, composer and bandleader Bill Frisell cites such musical voices as Hank Williams, John McLaughlin and George & Ira Gershwin as influences on the construction of *Ghost Town*, his first solo guitar album. Although their shadows lit through this personalized selection of rumbling instruments, it is the unacknowledged hand of John Fahey which seems to be plucking most vividly at Bill's strings the hardest. Just as Fahey industriously reconstructs the blues of Skip James, Frisell tinkers with Williams's croaky weeper "I'm So Lonesome I Could Die" and the Grimsby "My Plan Is Gone Now" from *Porgy and Bess*, two elemental songs from which he expertly picks up at like a hungry buzzard until only the bare bones remain.

**Georg Gräwe/Marcio Mattos/  
Michael Vatcher** Impressions  
Of Monk [www.monk.it.com](http://www.monk.it.com)

What might, on the surface appear to be yet another bunch of plodding musos doling their series to this old master of modern

size horns turns out to be nothing of the sort. Gato, Maros and Wachter's take on Thelonic Monk is admirably studious, but the manner in which they launch into Monk's music is warm, playful and aware of both how it works and the atmospheric conditions in which it was originally performed. Thus the usual dry scholastic concert hall approach is transformed here into an authentic smoke-filled subterranean groove with cool cat abstract piano constellations, beaming basslines and drum and cymbal explosions. All three players are excellent at illuminating the intricacy, imagination and achievement of Monk's musical legacy.

**Nimipiriga/Jason Lescalette** in  
Which The Silent Partner-  
Director Is No Longer Able To  
Make His Point To The Industrial  
Dreamer [edgeworks.net/03/04](http://edgeworks.net/03/04)

The cover is a scrap of vile coloured card that has been bonded together with an ugly black sticky label on which the credits have been printed in minuscule white type: only serves to make this work by Cambridge.

Massachusetts based Improv duo Niergen (Geg Kelley on trumpet, Bob Roney on soprano saxophone) even more obscure. Recorded in what sounds like a dungeon with tape loop computer wizard Jason Lescalette, the trio's combined muffled sawzaw, creek and electronic chitter slowly roars up and spits out a noise beyond human utterance. Although the trumpet mouthpiece sniggering intruders eventually become tiresome, it's still a monster.

**Urs Leimgraber** Blue Log #084  
(ARS #01137 CD)

The almost indiscernible gusts of breath with which saxophonist Lerngruber opens up his "Ten Pieces For Saxophone" could well have you wondering if your CD player is on the blink. Stick with it, though, as your patience will eventually be rewarded. That *Blue Log* takes time to get going is surely the point of this particular exercise which when in full flow is a revelation. Lerngruber escalates from mouse to the skirting board, styled key-

scurrings, to simulated throat singing and full blown Ayler attack in a way that will either have you crawling up the wall or baying for more.

Simon Picard/John Wolf  
Brennan/Eddie Prevost

**Entropology** (see 4.44A, 10.06 C). A perfectly acceptable, mostly harmless sounding tro-tension where the space between the notes sometimes sounds louder than the music being played. That said, however, Simon Pearce does a beautifully precise tenor sax, while John Will Bremson's prepared piano flurries and Eddie Prevost's ambient percussion and drum excursions provide suitable and effective back-up. *Entropology's* centerpiece — "Sex Herms For The New Millennium (A Suite) After Italo Calvino American Lessons Sex Herms For The New Millennium" (Hervé LeClerc, Milano 1998\*) — demands that you sit upright and pay attention before it fully reveals itself. But elsewhere — "The Third New Vibrations For An Old Galaxy" is a shimmering ecstatic drone, marbled with wonderful sounds of merrily howled from all three players.

**Gino Robair** Buddy Systems  
gino@buddy.com

to quote from his Website: "Gino Robair has developed a unique approach to the ordinary drumset by treating the drums as both a complex resonator and secondary sound source." All of which he does adeptly (together with a host of improving buddies) on this challenging, but thick-packed release. Armed with moosehide percussion, a gaseous tone, and a late Gio's Maestro (seemingly bought in Rome for \$700) Robair looks artless with a variety of players, including tenor saxophonist John Butcher, string drummer Carlo Kiliadis & Matthew Sperry and, best of all, tumble-toned Otis Yoshida? Their mechanical duet on "Impropriations" is a stuttering, scratchy mini-mozaïque which has more than a hint of Frank Zappa's early Mothers Of Invention era rock-concrete experiments churning through it.



It may seem daring to compare Schönberg's piano works in their significance with Beethoven's. Compared with the immense number of 32 piano sonatas there are just six opus of Schönberg's which what is more, often are hardly longer than a few minutes. And still the compositional evolution of this great innovator of the music of our century is mirrored within these little piano pieces ...

Imagine a young boy, nothing past an iron railing, a stick in his hand, exploring the various textures of the resonating metal. Imagine the same boy riding his bicycle at full speed, discovering the sound produced by the streamer when he opens his mouth, relishing in the multitude of overtones resulting when he changes the shape of his oral cavity... The note recorded on this CD is a vivid proof of such multi-faceted curiosity...

Composers such as those mentioned are a long way in re-defining the accordion, in liberating it from its relatively short, but heavily cliché-ridden history. In a way, the accordion's role may be compared with that of the saxophone—both children of the industrialisation of musical instrument, both aesthetically defined by certain popular idiom, both re-discovered and re-defined by the composers of New Music.

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new

20" to 2000" and  
con: not infinite  
signal output  
taylor: expensive, but  
con: mask of birth  
note: telefunken

## in brief outer limits

Reviewed by David Keenan

### Martin Archer Winter Pügram

Reprising *deus ex machina* to often epitomizing the random pink-glork of computer music, until now Martin Archer's electronic compositions have left me completely cold. But *Winter Pügram* Among marks a conceptual leap. Inspired in part by Archer's favourite music from the early 70s—Soft Machine, Faust and Nick Drake—it has an air of genuine faraway affection. The best stuff has a pastoral feel, lazily unwinding beneath sighing soprano sax and subtle electronics.

### C41 Copernacore STALPAC 5142 CD

Standing for Command, Control Communications, Computing and Intelligence—let the fun commence—C41 is the brainchild of Joe Banks of Deformation with John Eivell and Ashley Davies. Inspired by NJ McCamley's recently compulsive book *Secret Underground Cities*, C41's debut attempts to evoke the dead air and constant low level hum of Copernacore Quarry's now abandoned navy testing and storage facility. It's not easy to understand the sonic appeal of these places until you've actually visited one, but ever since I saw Deformation play in an abandoned nuclear bunker in Erie, Banks's music has had a disturbingly familiar air to it. On Copernacore tones flash through tunnels and massive steel doors clang and lock to disconcerting effect.

### Sally Doherty Empire Of Death

From hereditary coprophagist to necrotic! Sally Doherty's CD is the result of a BBC commission to soundtrack *Empire Of Death*, a documentary about a 1930s archaeological exhibition in Nubia which discovered the remains of an empire including the huge tombs where the whole of the royal court would be buried alive with the corpse of their king. Doherty's soundtrack is every bit as eerie as its subject matter, contrasting Arabic modes with doomy choral austerities, maulistic percussion and proto-Industrial electronics.

### Cinastio Di Gregorio Spirit

STORIA 82 AND CD

A former Berlin cinematographer, Di Gregorio here turns his smart ass to musical experimentation. Spirit cuts the dumbest concept this side of all those hideous "Stars On 45" records, pining off legions of appealing indie rockers such as Jon Spencer and Nine Inch Nails with the likes of Eric Dolphy, John Coltrane and, er, Paul Simon

in a nonstop series of fantasy jams. He simply erects a cherry beat and drops in a bit of each of his victims. Back behind that camera, chump.

### Makoto Kawabata's Inui Inui

SAKIT UP  
The further Acid Mothers Temple Musica Transonic guitarist Kawabata moves away from his one-trick motorpsycho guitar, the greater emotional depth his music acquires. Some of his finest work has been in all-acoustic settings, such as his solo sarang, sax or with his acid-folk collective Floating Flower. Inui is a mostly solo set of slow grating, ethno trance and howling at the moon. Kawabata utilizes wudu, sarang, oud and star in an attempt to vibrate the ground beneath his feet, and although some of the psych effects are extremely cheesy in the tight frame of mind, this could well be your ticket elsewhere.

### Steven Wray Lobdell

Automatic Writing By The Moon

HOLY MOUNTAIN 1111 CD

**Davis Redford Triad Ewage Blumenkraft** HOLY MOUNTAIN 1084 CD  
As a member of the reformed Faust, Lobdell was largely responsible for that unit's latterday rock relevance, springing his acid guitar over the clang-on-clang of metal and drill. His first solo album *Automatic Writing By The Moon* is a slow-soak in buzzing modal acoustics, a la Robbie Basho with heavy minimal prayer bowl paces and slow-winding Quakerizer-like thrives in Davis Redford Triad is Lobdell's five-piece psych-rock group, and while Ewage Blumenkraft is nowhere near as powerful as their debut, it still gets pretty soulful when Lobdell starts to churn his bloodied strings on the towering "Rabbit Love Call."

### Yoshio Machida Hypematural

HYPERMUSICAL CD

Inside a silver-etched humbowed box you get a full-colour booklet of Machida's tactile artworks which utilise found ingredients such as soil, fat, acid, coffee and newspaper, and you even get your very own tiny bird feather. Machida's soundscapes are every bit as organic and texturally intricate as his artwork, combining detailed field recordings with ethnic bells, steel guitar, some non-intrusive electronics and bamboo flutes. Unlike many of these investigations into area sonologies, *Hypematural* feels genuinely transporative, opening up massive forest areas or tiny devotional paths when he bird chirps chime with bells and flutes.

### Princess Dragonmom Fear Of Evil

THE PROSPECT OF A whole disc of cover versions of Blue Oyster Cult had me salivating. Unfortunately it's some geeky concept piece which reduces the likes of Transmutation MC to turned Flamin'-like electronic distortion for some cheap laughs. Hurling a full-length release on the back of a chess puzzle only confirms the belief that too many people are being allowed to release music. If I was Back Drama I'd kick their ass and just because I'm not does it mean I won't.

### Psychic TV Were You Ever

Bullied At School? Do You Want Revenge? CD  
COLD SHINE 1207 2XCD

The first of these two shows from late 1984-era PTV is a raging performance from Hamburg. It blasts off with the repeat-rallying of "Turn The Golden Thread" and from there breaks through into over-loaded passages of pure noise. Alex Ferguson's guitar sounds as weirdly ecstatic as ever, firing off sizzling rounds that only raise the air of mayhem. After this, the second disc is a real disappointment. Further, the sound quality is so noisy that "Goddard could pass for a Hall Man Half Sixout outside."

### Bisnie Siwula & Donald

Miller Glass Factory 1011 CD

THE GLASS FACTORY 1011 CD  
Gus Miller is a disconcertingly lacklustre series of quasi-busybeat Borbetomagus, national Drinkwell filler, and also saccharine Sufida. The problem stems from a time that positions Miller was in the background where it's impossible to make out much in the way of nuance or emphasis. Siwula plays like a bemused sore thumb for the most part, ruffling up and down the scales in a style that's as thrilling as a cheese sandwich.

### Sorrow The Final Solstice 2

BOX 120101 CD

*The Final Solstice 2* is a more public result of a limited edition handmade CD originally limited to commemorate the last solstice of the previous millennium, featuring ex-Swampblade and sometime Current 93 member Rose McDowell. The standout track is undoubtedly by Rosa Hunda McDowell's collaboration with Cot's John Balance. Their uneasy reading of "The Snow Man" (aka "Waking In The Air") is oftenworldly with Balance's deep intonation the perfect counterpart to McDowell's ethereal chant. Elsewhere Current 93's David Tibet reads from Spenser's *Force Queen*. By way of thanks McDowell includes an unreleased Swampblade track called "Tribal Switchblade dome called 'Tribal

## **charts**

## Playlists from the outer limits of planet sound

## Octopus 15

**Arvo Pärt** *Arvo Pärt* (Dm)  
**Atman** *Tradition* (Drumken Fer-  
**Burn Cello** *Burn Cello* (Cornet)  
**Conjunct** *Earprints* (Source)  
**Funk** *Modern Cinema Soundtracks* (Fat Cat)  
**Funkhaus** *Appetite For Destruction* (M7)  
**Graham Haynes** *BPM* (Karnak Factory)  
**Jim Lawless** *Purification* (Nv)  
**Wayne Horvitz & Tony Hrush** *Egypt* (Klarning Factory)  
**Quattro Helios** *Quattro Helios* (Ward ouette)  
**Marcus Schmieder** *Solo Rites* (A-Muski)  
**The Tape-Beadles** *The Grand Deception* (Steelbeak)  
**Various** *Jazz Actual* (Cherry)  
**Various** *Naked And Alone* *Celebrity Circuit* (Diskoak)  
**Carmel Zekri** *Le Festival De L' Eau* (Ward ouette)  
**David Zuckerman** *David Zuckerman* (Dinos-musique)

## Incredibly Strange Electronics 15

**John Pfeiffer** Electronic Music / 9 Images (RCA)  
**Luciano Berio & John Cage** Electronic Music / Two 4800s  
**Wendy Carlos** Some Seasons (CBS)  
**Morton Subotnick** Silver Apples Of The Moon / Nineas  
**Andres Levin-Richter & Tzvi Avni** Electronic Music / Turnabout  
**Don Harper** Homo Electronicus (Columbia)  
**Andre Armand** Musiques Experimentales (Disques Ades)

**IBM T990 Computer Music From Mathematics** (Brunswick)  
**Reaver & Krause** Guide To Electronic Music (Nonesuch)  
**Tom Dissevelt & Kid Baltus** Song Of The Second Moon  
 (Limelight)  
**John Adams** Light Over Water (New Albion)  
**Various** BBC Radiophonic Music (BBC)  
**Charles Wuorinen** Time's Encomium (Nonesuch)  
**Dennis Swalley** The Pubes Of Time (UEA)  
**Perrey & Kingsley** Spotlights On The Moog (Vanguard)  
 Compiled by Sherie Quinlan: The Garden of Earthly Delights, Radio  
 Clinic 20.8 FM, Indianapolis, Indiana 10/26/1976

## Unavailable 15

**The Hafler Trio** *Mosley Of Ourselves (Ralph)*  
**The Count Project** *Recordings Of Unlabeled Numbers  
 Strangers (John Dossi)*  
**Punking Up** *Bow Of Silk And Dogs (Shirley)*  
**Reinberg & Bauer** *<off>(Up) Touché*  
**Runaway Train** *Runway Train (Ash Interpersonel)*  
**Lemon Kittens** *We Buy A Hammer For Daddy  
 (Bar On's voice)*  
**Dumey Run** *The New Sound Of Qnab (Lastrum)*  
**The Hafler Trio** *An Utterance Of The Supreme  
 Voluntary act. Solitismen*  
**E.C. Gilbert, G.Lewis, Russell P.M.** *MOU (Cherry Red)*  
**Soviet-Traffic** *Mohammeds (Chattara)*  
**This Heat** *Descent (These Records)*  
**Bernard Pormegron** *De Nature Sonorum (INA GRP)*  
**Charles Hayward** *Switch On War (Sub Rosa)*  
**The Residents** *Not Available (Ralph)*

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## WSTUM 15

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**Touch And Go**  
**Elliott Sharp & Orchestra** Carbon Syntax (Zov) **Ryuichi Sakamoto** BTIB (Sony Classical)  
**C2** Inert Control (Control Freak)  
**Loren Mazzacane Connors & Jim O'Rourke**  
In Bern (Just Noise)

**Twins 1903** Chapter One (Emanem)  
**Town And Country** Decoration Day (Thrill Jockey)  
**Charles Colson** Les Corne Enlous (Emmentees Digitalis)  
**Matthew Shipp Duo With Plat Plaueri** Gravitational  
 Systems (Hology)  
**Friends Df Sean Martinez** A Place In The Sun  
 (Knitting Factory)  
**Sn Ropes** Three Chemes (Pensable)  
**Eugene Russell** Plasmoidal Plenture Music (Frank Automotiv)  
**The Residents** American Composer Series  
 (East Side Digital)  
**Last Days Df Play** Radiant Black Mind (Squealer)  
**Alvin Lucier** Theme (Lovefly)  
 13linesin: Greg WSP/Ratio (Mashon Whomper USA) Nelsion  
 @SouthSide

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**Erin Eno** Kate Stoenes (Opal CD-R)  
**Doctor Reckit** Indoor Fireworks (Jukebox)  
**Cell** Queens Of The Circulating Library (Eskaton)  
**Clare Conrad** **Machinae** **Young Zazelle** Inside The Dream  
 Syndrome Vol. 1 Day Of Niagara (Table Of The Elements)  
**Chicago Underground** Duo Synthesia (Trill Jockey)  
**Doug Wimbish** Tricky Notes For Bass (QW-U Sound)  
**Sonic Sues** The Senty Annies (Ozone)  
**Luc Ferrari** Dances Organiques (Elcal)  
**Mum** Yesterday Was Dramatic: Today Is OK (TMT)  
**23 Skidoo** Album Sampler (Nrgt)  
**Pharaoh Sanders** **Hurled Drake** **Adam Rudolph**  
 Santa (Hmz)  
**Enora Portuondo** Enora Portuondo (World Circuit)  
**Diana Parker & John Tibbary** Two Chapters And An  
 Epilogue (Matchless)  
**Rachel's Matrons** Full  
 On Night 6  
 (Quarterstick)  
 Compiled by  
 The Wire Sound  
 Vol. 2001



# multi media

Jeff Noon tells Don Watson why liquid dub poetics are the new sci-fi



The present sure is tense: Jeff Noon

These are difficult times for the written word. The stuffy Victorian structures that William Burroughs's work strove to shake off seem more solidly in place than ever. In looking for a new mode of writing, one that is resilient of the 21st century as opposed to pre-multimedia age of drawing rooms and linear narrative, it's AS Byatt, British science fiction author. Jeff Noon has looked to contemporary musical devices.

I find it ridiculous that we are now entering a new century and the Victorian narrative is still in place, says Noon, a Mancunian who has recently relocated to Brighton.

Experiments are the heart of storytelling when new ways of connecting words to the human heart are uncovered.

*Needle In The Groove*, Noon's 19th novel, is where the mainstream of literature ought to be in the 21st century. It draws its inspiration from a swirling, sensually charged, chemically enhanced culture of drugs and remakes that shapes both its subject matter and its form. Written in the present tense, the entire book is composed as

lyrics, short lines punctuated only by (few) slashes to indicate the line endings, and to keep the beat. It is a book about music; its protagonist is a bass player drawn into a transformative world where the technology exists to turn music into liquid, creating rich and strange narratives that, like music itself, have the power to draw you back into the past.

I started writing the book in conventional sentences," explains Noon, "but I kept staring after a few pages. I realised it was breaking up the emotions into packets of information." Once he had devised what he calls "the liquid dub poetics," the story developed an immediacy it had previously lacked. I found that I was suddenly right inside the character's head composing the narrative as though he were thinking it directly onto the page. So the novel became a kind of extended improvisation upon the liquid music theme, and how the experience of such a music would affect the psyche. The book is infused by music, creating a strobe-lit Wonderland which is clearly informed by the stomach-churning sense-bass and beat in the

way that Kerouac's descriptions once echoed the spirals of a saxophone solo.

The novel, Noon believes, "is the recording of an imaginary music," and the music takes a tangible form on an accompanying CD in which fragments of Noon's prose are set to a shimmering, electrostatic music by David Toop. Like the liquid music, *Needle In The Groove*, he says, is analogue rather than a digital experience.

A digital experience is one where we have to consider the connecting points between action and reaction," he posulates. "It's a cookbook. A sentence begins, the capital letter tells us to turn on the receiving device, it sends across the information, and then it ends, with the full stop asking us to turn off the receiving device. We then have to process the information immediately; however, we have to turn the receiving device back on again for the next sentence, the next batch of info. It's a stopgap system which just didn't seem to be of much use to what I was trying to discover with *Needle In The Groove*."

"The analogue experience is one where the information forms a map, rather than a cookbook. It's very direct, where the receiving device has to blend with the message. We don't need to think about it so much, because it works directly on the emotions. I guess this is one reason for my obsession with the present tense. I can take the reader by the hand so to speak, and lead them directly through each moment of the story."

*Needle In The Groove* is a much more emotionally charged experience than the average narrative. Its musical form means it conveys more in the heightened emotional stratosphere of opera rather than on the more mundane plane of drama. The fractured narrative allows us to experience emotions pulsing before our eyes. Like the events in a film, like Burroughs, whose *Naked Lunch* is *Needle's* nearest ancestor, Noon is obsessed by the mystical notion of the Quest, and both are infused by the sense of the transformative power of hallucinogenic drugs. However, it is no great surprise to discover that Noon has never finished reading a Burroughs book.

It's funny," he smiles, "someone was complaining in another mag that what I was doing was stolen from Burroughs. Well, it might be spiritually stolen, but physically it's an impossibility. I haven't read the guy anywhere near enough to steal anything off him. Of course, I'm aware of his debt. Maybe one day I'll get to appreciate the work too. That happened with Philip K Dick, who I read because people kept telling me I was influenced by him. Maybe influence happens at a deeper level than just reading the texts."

Noon's books abound with drug parallels. In

his first novel *Urt*, coloured feathers lead the characters into a vivid hallucination in which they confront their own memories. *Roller* features a dark odyssey into the Underworld, full of pagan symbolism. *Automated Alice* is based on Lewis Carroll's texts, which have accumulated a certain tolerance; significance in drug culture. The liquid spheres in *Needle In The Groove* transform the senses, make music sound better and open the door to memory. "If music were a drug, where would it take you?" runs the subtitle on the cover. It isn't just the reference to needles; there is also a sense of Lord, protect me from what I want."

"For me, it's a direct metaphor for alcoholism, with which I had a major problem a few years ago," explains Noon. "There are two formulae at the beginning of the book: one is the chemical symbol for turning sugar into alcohol; the other is the chord sequence of a particular song. The novel *Roller* was also a metaphor for the transformative power of wine, with John Banville as 'the hero'." *Needle In The Groove* is the last book Noon wrote before he moved to Brighton, and there is a sense of ingesting farewell about it. It describes a future Manchester, where streets are named after the city's music, like Curtis Boulevard, Buzcocks Station, Slaughter Dog Hotel. It reads like a personal memory, where the soundtrack has become a part of the physical structure of the city.

"When I was young, Manchester was this distant metropolis which we hardly ever visited, even though it was only eight miles away," he recalls. "When I moved into the city itself, about the age of 18, punk was just taking off. I just fell in love with the dark energy that it uncovered. There was a fallow period. When I started writing novels, set home. I started to fall in love again. But it's funny, you know the more books I write, there and about there, the more ambiguous I felt about the place. In the end, I just had to escape, start afresh. I'm amazed I took me 42 years to manage it."

"I took me about four months in Brighton to realise just what the problem was. And it's very simple. I wanted to be a Local Hero, desperately. I wanted people to speak of me in the same way they speak of The Fall or The Smiths. But it just wouldn't happen. In the last few days before I left, I would wander the streets with this cloud of sadness all over me. A sense of having failed. But I had this secret inside me, which was *Needle In The Groove*. It's like a time capsule I can leave behind," he concludes. "My own little history. If you like *Needle In The Groove*, I published this month by Transworld. A companion spoken word CD with music by David Toop is released simultaneously on Salsbury.



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### Experimental Musical Instruments

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California organization Experimental Musical Instruments has gone from publishing a quarterly printed journal to becoming an online resource center for the design, construction and enjoyment of unusual sound sources. Edited by Bart Hopkin who compiled the brilliant CD compilations *Gravlands*, *Whirls And Pyrophones* and *Orations*, *Spoon Hears 6* *Bellevophones* a while back (for *Elopes Arts*) the EMI site contains articles, a massive links page and an online ordering facility. Visit it to secure the ultra-obscure correlation tapes that came with the journal while it was in circulation. With features on bamboo saxophones and *Synacros* kotos made out of *Synacron* as well as a handy fret-placement calculator, the site is a must for any hands-on sound sculpture enthusiast.



### Improvised Music From Japan

[www.japanimprov.com](http://www.japanimprov.com)

If you think keeping up with the oriental Improv bubble economy seems like a full time job, then click on this. Completely stripped of the quirky outerness or stark Miyu-esque minimalism usually associated with Japanese design, *Improvised Music From Japan* is a hardcore, no-nonsense information database stubbornly defying any modish "Japanese cool" stereotypes. The site includes homepages for artists such as Hiko, Osamu Yoshida, Toshimaru Nakamura, Sachiko M and related collaborative projects like ISO Ground Zero and Florent. As well as updating all related upcoming concerts outside Japan, the site's creator Yoshitaka Suzuki links up independent labels, backing a similar musical agenda.

ANNE WILDE MESEY



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# print run

New music books read, raved about, roughed up

## Hip Hop America

By Nelson George  
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By Cathy Scott  
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By Tupac Shakur  
QUINTET Pbk \$10

Hip-hop needs its users' manuals. How many of the millions who bought their in-vogue Fugees CD, say, could unravel the dialectic that deyschams together Fredrick Douglas and Dolomite with Dick Van Dyke and Eliot Ness? Or caught the melncholic pulse behind the hedonistic liquor fumes when Pras says, "Pour a tip on the concrete for the deconstructed"? How many of the Top Shop babes who wear their jeans lo-slung like Al Saints know that this particular style originates in US correctional facilities where inmates have their belts taken away as a matter of institutional course? Or that the fashion for hooded tops began in the 'hood, where graffiti bombers wore 'em that way to elude CCTV and/or prevent looting behind bars of themselves on the high wire?

Thus do local inquiries fall into the dizzying fun of super-idiomatic Capital. What does "popularity" mean in such a context? "It ruled the world" — "wang the dime P's L Boogie. But what is lost in the upload from ghetto signifier to global 'acceptance'? You can only marvel at the front of the first B-boy to wear Hijliger and make it work, but when people start getting killed for the latest Tommy or Timberland we confront a deadly kind of materialism. These are far from being innocuous questions of PeMo style — on some level they are life and death matters. Especially when the originators of the wildstyle remain poor and occluded imprisoned and buried while the 'troops' (and copyrights) are reaped by middle-class style editors and multinational fashion corps.

If these four books do something/all of these thorny questions, they do at least flesh out the bigger picture in often

surprising ways. Hip-hop needs myriad users' manuals — that is its protean nature. Hip Hop America ably registers the phenomenal 360 degree richness of Hip-hop's 20 year history. Moreover, Nelson George gets this complex revolution down in 200 pages and all quotable aside, you'd have to be a churl not to recognise this as a vital touchstone tome, a thematic spellbook which you can use to riff off on your own adversary tangents. George is a fluent and winning commentator whose sometime involvement with his subject (as producer, scenemaker, etc.) doesn't prevent him from registering crucial ambivalences. As he rightly says, opposition to Hip-hop splits along gender, about as much as race or class lines, and he won my confidence straight off by confessing an often schizophrenic position backed into defending something he often feels doubtful about.

It's impossible not to have quibbles with either Hip-hop or any given view of it. But this is surely the nature of the Beast: there can never be one shining Truth of Hip-hop due to its always contradictory and provisional plethora of narratives. I can't help but feel his notion of a "true

understanding of Hip-hop" runs counter to the deconstructive truth of Hip-hop, especially as the (il)logic of sampling has overturned all sureties regarding copyright attribution and univocal truth. Hip-hop represents itself in a series of flashes and breaks — as much like Burroughs cut-ups or comic strips as African grots and Old School R&B. Can you copyright a technique or a phrase or a hand sign? Can you copyright artists' theft? Such peripheral inquiries actually open onto a potentially incendiary and genuinely 'postmodern' art politics (never Fredrick Jamerson thus style was genius), which it remains up to other authors to pursue. George, however, is brilliant on his own ground, as a black youth who roughly

(but not exactly) came of age with Hip-hop: he's in a good position to illuminate from within details small and big, from what beers kids drank on Saturday nights to the role that different styles of basketball play as they impact on black street style. And

this is surely the core point (which, if George advances more anekdotally than theoretically he advances nonetheless): the history of Hip-hop at any given moment is always the history of 21 other things. In this register George is right on the money, deft and true in his choice of things to zero in on: crack, black sportswear, beepers and mobiles, Al Pacino in Scarface. He places early break battles within a context of kung fu street corner basketball and Jamaican immigrant memories of hi-fi sound battles, the kind of casual montage

stockings which might escape outsiders. George also uses his insider position (he's a sometime Billboard staffer) to make sense of someone like the much reviled Puff Daddy. No matter what we think of the execrable papi PD puts out — we shouldn't underestimate the symbolic/political heft of this lone black man's emcee building. He may not have the hip cachet of your Schooly Ds and Biggies (who barely appear to something impossible), but Puff is rising to keep ahead of his own pack of phantom headlines. George is good on this boardroom aces and the movers and shakers who made it. This reveals something of a gap in his narrative — the post-crack streets that get left behind.

I'm not sure what kind of 'story' it is that the best account — William Shaw's Westsidiers — of this hinterland should come from a white middle class English boy. There's a little lesser Thomas Pynchon essay from the late 80s called A Journey into the Mind Of Watts, and it's here (along with Mike Davis's regional City Of Quartz) that journal Shaw takes his place: a culture critic probably off his given beat. His pitch in Westsidiers — the stories of seven young black kids from South Central LA living their lives according to a rap code while trying to carve out careers in music/random — is halfway between plan conscientious reportage and something like the spectral novel.

Hip-hop culture has yet to produce a rap version of Pynchon's Crying Out Loud 49 or DeLima Cooper's gay maps of LA perdition. Westsidiers isn't about Hip-hop's music or myths. It's a liberally down to earth report from the foot soldier end of the front line. Scores from the Boys in

Dead end kid: Tupac Shakur



the Hood." Although not about the music per se, it provides a good aerial illumination of a lot of the hermetic code and some of the more baffling aspects of Cali Hip-Hop's gang elegances, territory markers, slang wars. Westdiers is rich in such details, and Shaw wisely lets the often meandering resonances arise naturally from his text. Discussing a new ghetto style, it emerges that the *flow* of choice (and a major influence on the hardbagg production sound) is "Jammakihyah." Such scarcely believable facts verge on rovelist adorns, ringing with the sed, sublime paganism of DeLillo's *Underworld*.

Shaw sure has put in his empathetic footwork, and his text is correspondingly good on prose: detail, phatic burn and pressure drop, the day to day burden of dreams. His method risks textual monotony in echoing the killing repetition of acolyte/apprentice lives. And sure enough about two-thirds into its 380 pages the tale becomes as grinding, wearing and mercilessly dull in its telling as the lives themselves. It could have done with some tactical editing, because for those who make it through the downtime, the later pages pay off in full. A final section on Tupac especially is high grade reportage — sure, unimpassioned and hoarse.

Where Shaw gets a genuinely moving slant on Tupac's end days, Cathy Scott's *Killing Of Tupac* (Shaw is strictly *not* the facts man in its overview of Shakur's long last night on earth. Scott is a local crime beat reporter neither than a hip-hop rep, but then even Nelson George seems to take Tupac's story at face value rather than dig through the supposedly laid conveniently par web of coincidences and misadventures that surrounded both attempts on Shakur's life. Admirably Scott's aim is just to proffer a Polaroid snap of one dark night — and *Killing* does have some value for putting certain facts out there, but ultimately it feels like a ready cash-in, a feeling underlined by the wholly unnecessary mortality viab photo. Tupac's murder by its nature surely raises the question: can such a death be explained by the supposedly random events of one night? More marginal journals speculate otherwise. Covert Action Quarterly no. 67 carries a solid piece by John Poush called "Tupac's Panther Shadow: The Political Targeting Of Tupac Shakur" that tells a genuinely once, nasty tale of post-Confederate machinations.

*The Rose That Grew From Concrete* is strictly for Tupac completists — and even they may find themselves less than electrified. It's a collection of the adolescent Tupac's writings, complete with suspiciously clean versions of the original manuscripts. Par for the hagiography industry, it's all very teeny dandy and adds little or nothing singular to our picture of this singular man for the most part. The prose, poetry herein could come from anyone. Granted that Black America needs as much more than most, but even in that regard Rose denatures the

complex nature of its subject. As one footnote tone among many in a serious biography, it might provide a small illumination, presented as a naked blot, reventral and unabridged, it feels pointless. Worse, it feels a tiny bit ideologically in its unsavory aim of whitening the lingering gangsta concourse. But neither so-called idea, truth or ironic, child — is true. Shakur was more complex than either, and the book's relentless, can somehow belittle that complexity. In his music, Tupac hints at some new form of poetry, where the dull ache of political speech is compressed/developed in a ruthless Constructivist slant: not noisy dope teenager soliloquy which drags out perceptions of him back down to earth.

It is a shame these four books get successively less essential as they move from the general to the specific. If there is a lacuna here, it's the lack of any words on the stylistic grit and grain of the music itself. Hip-hop's sonic groins, from the Heartfield collage culture of PE to the bubbler madness of current R&B. How the joys, agonies, incursions and surges of music-as-materiarity reflect or reflect life. Hip-hop still awaits its DeLillo, its Isherwood. Reed's new Greg Tate

IAN PONTAN

## Blutopia

By Graham Locke

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, \$12.95

Novelist Ishmael Reed has described himself as a "liberator of historical atrocity." In *Blutopia*, a book which acknowledges Reed's relevance to its concern with "visions of the future and revisions of the past," Graham Locke attributes a comparable role to Sun Ra. Duke Ellington and Anthony Braxton. He argues that in their music, and in the conduct of their lives, these men have sought to counter the exclusion of African-Americans and their creativity from standard white accounts of history.

In two opening chapters, Locke seeks to rescue Sun Ra from accusations of eccentric showmanship, chauvinism and madness, and to show that his adopted persona formed the cornerstone for a mythopoetic appropriation of an uneasy present, caught between the unthinkably collective past of slavery and an oppressively delimited future. Locke writes, "White denial of black existence was undoubtedly part of the reality that Ra was trying to out; as was his denial of black history [legitimacy] and white denial of black access to the future [real outer space]." Ra's extra-racialist trappings are re-assessed in terms of psychic hygiene, designed to promote an alternative view of reality within which his music might take effect as "cosmic tones for mental therapy."

Ra's was a myth with a job to do: to address the problems, rendering familiar restrictions on freedom obsolete and establishing a new system of values, grounded



Seeing it Differently: Sun Ra

in beauty allied with discipline. Locke draws upon interviews to support his thesis that Ra consciously utilized the symbology of sermons and spirituals, inverting it to counter what he saw as the Christian attempt to blot out the sun and dimmish life. Locke also suggests that Ra's adaptations of science fiction narratives were tactical manoeuvres aimed at unleashing creative potentialities, which were stifled by common sense and conformity. For Ra "truth" was secondary to the requirements of fulfilled being. When he proclaimed himself an angel, he was declaring personal and creative independence from the vociferous persisting even in petty instances, of social oppression and from the materialism and mediocrity of a world that locks vision. Ra's analysis is a necessary correction to persistent misunderstanding. He says disappointingly little about Sun Ra's music, but discusses instead the texts of The Arkstrak's chants and their film, *Spoon & The Place*.

This is a work of cultural history more concerned with casting light on the visionary framework than with analysing particular pieces. So Ellington is revisited as the creator of "jungle music," a calculatedly ironic primitivist mask beneath which foundations for some of the 20th century's most significant music were being laid, entirely contrary to the cultural expectations of racist orthodoxy. White American resistance to recognition of Ellington's stature is delineated through a series of telling instances, including demands that light-skinned players such as Puerto Rican Juan Tizol and Claude Lelandie Begerel should wear black make-up to make it clear that the group was not integrated. The fact

objective was to consign Ellington's ensemble to a crudely conceived black music ghetto. He responded with works such as "Black, Brown And Beige" and "A Drum Is A Woman", which countered "misrepresentations of the black past" and envisaged a future "in which such stereotyping no longer had a place".

Locke, whose dedication to the music of Anthony Braxton became fully evident with his extraordinarily ambitious book *Forces In Motion* (1988), here argues persuasively that Braxton is a comparably successful and daring resistor. Braxton's musical thinking has been evolved within a sophisticated conceptual structure as evolution, and anyone in its own way as Sun Ra's Afro Black Mythology. In place of Ra's cape, hood and skullcap, Braxton, in his early twenties, took to wearing wire-rimmed spectacles and cardigan and puffing on a pipe — a protestal pose defiantly renouncing conformity to any reductive type of the jazz musician. But as with Ra, it is his creative voyage into the meta-reality of imaginary space that really breaks the straightjacket of definitions. Ishmael Reed has suggested that genuinely avant garde art invites "tradition as a contemporary function", and Locke approvingly cites Peter Hadas Wilson's comparable observation that Braxton's *Composition 751* contains "traditional references without tradition definitions." Locke takes the ability of some other critics to rediscover the value of Braxton's work as symptomatic of those limiting preconceptions, in which their listening is deeply mired. Such preconceptions construct just tradition in a way that effectively circumscribes African-American musical aspirations and explorations. Braxton, on the other hand, "casts

[illegible]

JULIAN CONWLEY



Richard Meltzer

### A Whore Just Like The Rest: The Music Writings Of Richard Meltzer

By Richard Meltzer  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. J.

[illegible]

never even written and as such *Melior* can be rightly acknowledged in one of the original creators of that noisy, misunderstood avant-garde rock journalism. Before *Melior*, rock music was considered to be ephemeral and the only intelligent American popular music criticism available was in *Down Beat*, a jazz magazine which only occasionally acknowledged the existence of rock. *Melior*'s *Smash* however took down the barriers as to how rock should be perceived. Additionally it was faced through with an acidic sense of humour that by supplying a list of numbered annotations aimed ripe for satire at those serious jazz academics probably more interested in their own thinking than the music. In 1970 *Melior* expanded his philosophical approach to rock music with the first publication of its groundbreaking *The Aesthetics Of Rock*.

[illegible]

dud Penultima for Cream where for most of the review he repeats the same word several times, thereby making readers instantly aware of the kind of sonic tedium to expect should they be foolish enough to buy the record. As a piece of art, Heltzer's Penultima puzzle is probably the closest thing rock criticism has got to concrete poetry.

Muttize admits to hating interviews and the few examples included here (with John, one solemn gem; McLaughlin and Frank Zappa, clearly show that he felt uncomfortable in the presence of rock stars). However, his interview with the late Claude Bessy, the editor of *LA punk mag* *Slash*, is a joy to read. In this, understanding to understand his life and love of rock music in a candid conversation that also acts as a touching memorial to the much missed Kickboy Face (Bessy's pseudonym).

Meltzer obviously considered talking Cocktails With Claude a more important occasion than chewing the corporate lot (he was the late Frank Zappa). It was easily as much fun as talking to himself, which he does in a tongue-in-cheek piece titled "I, Meltzer Interviewed By A Walther." The imaginary meeting, which took place years before the pop artist interviewed anybody in full of Meltzer's classic surrealistic puns and ascribed myself when the reader is drawn into a mock meltdown of minds that says more about the interviewee process than anything else. Part autobiography, part fiction, it's *A Walther Just Like The Real* shows you kicking and screaming into the thick of the music business with its court of dross, pingers on and attendant synchroptic eye-lovers. Meltzer may call himself a whore, but you know that he would never really stop that low.

EDWIN POUNCEY

### Stockhausen On Music: Lectures And Interviews

[97] plus an interview from ten years later by sometime acolyte Robin Maconie, appeared in print in 1989 in his idiomatic English. It is now being reissued, unfortunately, in a straight reprint with no updating even of the list of works or discography (though lengthy press comments have been added at the beginning). Nonetheless, the volume remains an essential resource for Stockhausen devotees or anyone else interested in the development of modern music.

The lectures are preceded by two chapters. From an informal conversation with an anonymous interviewer<sup>1</sup> also in London in 1971. The first of these describes Stockhausen's isolated and terrifying wartime childhood: no doubt decisive in making him the impenetrable figure he became. His mother, a patient in a mental hospital, was murdered by the Nazis. His father, who was a Nazi, was determined not to survive the German defeat.

in 1945. The music that was taken away from me [the strength I became] I think that, being dead [my parents] gave me much more support than they would have in life." Stockhausen concludes: It's easy to see how someone in that situation could have regarded 1945 as Year Zero for art and music.

The lectures were for a general audience and Stockhausen's concepts are explained logically – point music, moment-form, statistical composition, intuitive music. The last category is a doggy one – Stockhausen is referring to his experiments in improvisation that's freer than free improvisation. He describes the evolution of point music in Puntig and Kontop-Puntig. The approach was criticised by philosopher Theodor Adorno for its lack of structure. I said: but Professor, you are looking for a chicken in an abstract painting. That's when I began to have my doubts about intellectuals and so-called specialists – Adorno was "not basically a creative person". As for specialists, he describes Ligeti, Xenakis and Feldman as "lame because they just specialise" (unpleasantly, in contrast, are tone

The intriguing lecture "Microphony" explores the thinking behind the semi-sonic piece *Microphone I*, where the microphone itself becomes a musical instrument. To produce a score of the work, the composer had to create a language to describe sounds in themselves: analogous, he says, to the Ovidian catalogue for colours. It looks like there's a conflict here with the more hazy language of *Four Criteria of Electronic Music*, where he says that more precise visual language has taken the magic out of perception.

That lecture is the largest and most important. Stockhausen outlines his views on the continuum of music and noise, synthesizing and splitting individual sounds, the need for new concert venues to transcend stereo listening habits and the unification of form and material. Those final remarks are interesting because it could be said that Stockhausen's formal developments were taken by other composers in more interesting material directions. In the interview with Macneume some familiar Stockhausen themes recur: the composer as radio receiver, the subservience of American art to European, the importance for all music students to study Stockhausen scores.

The text is pervaded by Schoenhausen's age, sometimes implicitly or via references to the artist as *visus vetus*, but often directly: "The idea that music is for everybody is equally ridiculous," he writes, "certain people simply respond to sounds far better than most. At the end of the spectrum are the very few artists with visionary power. Those who were able to announce the next stages in the development of mankind, really inscribe into the future and through their work prepare the people for what was to come." However, the ego was probably required for the achievement. Here the Eagle of Modernism is in inescapable form and he demands to be heard.

ANDY HARTON

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No. 402

## Jah Warrior

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### Distribution

**Run by** Steve Mosco

**Description** Central label with the UK reggae circuit for its roots, reggae and new dubplates, and numerous compilations

**Roster includes** Prince Alla, Peter Broggs, Tere Stein, Tony Roots, African Simba, Culture Freeman, Nasty-Tal, King General, Hughie Nachter, Jah Warrior

**Brief history** Having attended sound system sessions by Jah Shaka, Ste Coxsone and others on a regular basis from the late 1970s onwards, dub and roots reggae has played a major part in my life. I started my own system called Jah Warrior in 1987, and my first production was the 1989 Warner Dub LP by Zulu Warriors for WAUW. Mode I founded Jah Warrior Records in 1995, recording at Douglas Marry's Conscious Sounds studio. The first release was the hugely popular 12" single "The 22nd Book" by Nasty-Tal. Jah Warrior Records has now become an integral part of the UK roots/dub scene. After many years of running the sound system, I decided to call it a day in 1998: the label is now my full-time focus.

**Statement of intent** At first it was all dub, dub, dub, however, the focus of what I'm doing now has changed to roots reggae (both vocal and dub), working with classic Jamaican artists, with the emphasis on originality and authenticity. Essentially, I'm putting a modern twist on the golden era of roots reggae (1975-81), when the music had depth, power and feeling. I aim to show the world that we can make music in England that is every bit as good as the music from Jamaica.

**Other activities** Occasional DJ spots, quizzing with other sound systems like Trojan Steps

**Future plans** Prince Alla & Gary and Peter Broggs' Jah Golden Theme due for release this month. A DJ album, *Three the Roots Way* featuring U. Brown, Tunny and Raining Joe is scheduled for autumn as well as Jah Warrior Showcase Volume 2, featuring Earl 16, Prince Alla, Anthony Johnson, President Brown, Alton Atlas and Jah Warrior Showcase, Jah Warrior — Dub From The Heart

(Jah and marlinista Steve Mosco)

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LEUVEN BELGIUM





# on location

Going live: festivals,

concerts, clubs in the flesh



Downtwisting angle: *Coil's* Time Machines. Below: Julian Cope

## Julian Cope's Cornucopia

UK London South Bank Centre

Billed as 'a festival of plenty' by its curator Julian Cope, the two nights spent in the company of his various label mates, old mates and heroes turned out to be more a test of endurance. Until now I have purposefully avoided coming into contact with Cope and his voluminous works, due mainly to the druggy students/Glastonbury association that immediately springs to mind whenever his name is (rarely) discussed. Of his vast back catalogue of songs I know nothing, and so it was something of a queasy revelation to hear him hold court in the packed foyer of the Queen Elizabeth Hall as he jockeys between an admittedly pleasing enough solo sampling of his discos, what treats we could expect from his overflowing Cornucopia. The evening would conclude, he told us, with Julian's latest project: a five-part, one-chord one-day 'Live Metal' group called Brainslayer, which was fired by a chance confrontation between Cope and hated 80s Heavy Metal merchants Manowar (whose creed demanded 'Death To False Metal') over the amount of nose art host was making in a neighbouring hotel room. Oh, how we howled, our heads

ringing with their abysmal din and our minds scrambled by the sheer stupidity of this April Fools Day joke that took an eternity to play out.

Three ensembles (one good, one bad, one awful) from the first evening remain. 60s survivors The Groundhogs, set in the cramped Purcell Room provided the night's only highlight, with leader/lead guitarist/vocalist Tony (TS) McPhee in line form as he led us through a sonically stimulating selection of 'Hags' hits. Even if you are unfamiliar with such past album glories as *Thank Christ For The Bomb* or *Spit*, to witness McPhee (it one with his guitar is an impressive sight. Years of experience have forged a partnership between player and instrument which, in performance, culminates in a breathtaking display of string-driven, whammy-bar bending pyrotechnics with the rest of the group hunched in the shadows like a bad later version of Nippon Ashtar's psych-nose trio *High Rise*. The Hags looked awful. Which is more than can be said for Liverpoolians Skyray, in the far lozier QEH nod floor, playing in front of a projected tropical fish backdrop. After two or three minutes of Ambient gloom, I quickly returned to The Groundhogs.

For worse than Skyray, however, were Queen Elizabeth, the project. Cope shares with Coil's *Thigh Paulthanda*, whose torridous hour

long set of computerised tweaking and twiddling interspersed with Cope's moaning vocal and unremarkable Minimoog and mellotron contributions, did little to advance the progress of electronic music in the 21st century. The quartet's 'Temple Of Deina' was constructed from a steadily ascending/descending series of pulsating

drones and decorated with the occasional theremin squallor from Thigh Paulthanda, who — conducting his fellow cones from behind a towering bank of equipment — had the unenviable task of preventing the whole thing from freefalling into total chaos. It conceived and lacking in any original thought, purpose or direction, this overblown exercise failed to recognise both electronic music's prestigious past and its adumbrated current route in preference for a mind-numbing nostalgic yawn. Cope was no doubt dreaming of Zet-era Tangent Dream when he rolled out the blueprint for 'Temple'. That the end result resembled the worst excesses of Tomita suggests that this is one musical area he can preach about (see his book *Knouroscomplex*) but not practise.

Part two of Cornucopia took place on (Barth) Mothering Sunday and was a much more successful affair. Free of the clutter which clogged up part one, the evening featured Coil Cope (again) and the first performance for 30 years of Knouros! Legends. Both R2 Tempel with guitarist Manuel Gottschang and electronic legend Klaus Schulze. Coil's *Time Machines* extravaganza, however, was the evening's main attraction. The quartet marched on to a specially designed set that looked like a cross





between the control room of a spacecraft and the interior of a masonic lodge. All four members were lit up identically in one-piece, hooded white fur fabric suits decorated with mirrored discs, that made them resemble the Teletubbies after signing up to the UK branch of magical order Ordo Templi Orientis. Behind them hung a backdrop on which was printed a black oval inset with a planetary sigil. This was the gateway through which Coli were going to transport their audience using electronic sound, lights, mirrors, dry ice and a little magic. Although it took a while to warm us, lift off was finally achieved when the band launched into "The Mothership And The Fatherland" from *Ash Ra Tempel*—and later with new composition "Queens Of The Cruising Library," which featured the voice of Thelma Houston's mother. The flickering strobe-driven pulse beat spectacular first ensued—complete with oblique mirror flashes and sensual fluid lightshow—hooked you into the fusion that the Festival Hall had actually become a gigantic intergalactic mothership travelling in deep space. When Coli returned to earth (signalled by an ear drum chilling down chorus of electronic beeping) they gave each other a big hug and waved goodbye "Thank God" yelled some mixed dub at the back, but for those of us who had to suffer the horrors of Cornucopia so far, Coli had been a godsend.

After another appearance by Drolan (some jokes, some songs, some Puppets, harco, more guitars), Ash Ra Tempel strode onstage to take their places before walls of digitally flashing equipment. Their skillfully played professional set (dedicated to former bass player Haimut Enke) lasted just over an hour, with Gutthugger plucking abrasively at his row of electric and acoustic guitars, while Schaefer provided an obligatory synth-generated, Floydisan prophetic drone to accompany the antithetical apocalyptic projected on the walls. There were no surprises and no disappointments. Ash Ra Tempel sounded just like you would expect them to: frozen in time but slightly shifting. The perfect ending, in fact, to the less than perfect last weekend

EDWIN POWELL

## Frédéric Galliano & Neba Solo

Parc des Glaciers

With the romance of Paris, located in the very northwest corner of the city practically right under the Péniche (French for the North Circular Road), in a district of neon and purpose-built underblock apartment buildings, the Glaciar art bar doesn't exactly have the most exclusive of addresses. Smack in the middle of a cruddy strip mall, the Glaciar would be a listed car dealership in any other city in the world.

However, this being Paris, the Glaciar is actually a cozy, surprisingly pleasant and relaxed space forming a pan-global fusion of both music and art. You are greeted at the door by a woman inviting you to partake of a

companion of African dance remixes, *Frikywa* Collection 1 on Galliano's Frikywa label.

The balloon is a West African xylophone of 18 to 21 keys made of sticks, planks and various sizes of gourd instruments played by the Mande people of Mali and Guinea. In practice, these nicely odd instruments look like the ribcages holding up the cow skulls you find in the middle of the desert. In the West, the xylophone may be good for nothing, but teaching pre-schoolers "Frère Jacques" (but in the hands of Soulaymane Traoré (aka Neba Solo) and Soko Traoré the balloon is a mesmerizing percussion tool, perfect for this age of melodic drumming. Running contrary to the usual flow of information in Afro-European fusions, the spellbinding quality of the balloon is actually enhanced by Galliano's synth washes and basslines.

The show begins with Galliano seated at his Powerbox, interjecting funk-dub basslines and stuttering beats in between Solo's balloon lines. They are soon joined by the other Traoré, three percussionists and two dancers who remind me of early 90s Cameroonian duo Eppe and Koum, hopping back and forth like high school cheerleaders in brown jeans, trousers resembling Bill Hammer's balloon pants and while K-Swiss trainers. The second number finds Galliano dropping elongated waltz patterns behind a mixer of interlocked percussion while the third builds the momentum with slithering basslines and more straightforward driving beats.

The middle part of the set can beaurous Galliano's electronic beat calls underneath balloon notes that are somewhere between soothing and glittering. It's all very beautiful, the

a page-a-day desk calendar)

When Galliano and Neba Solo return they build slowly with more hypnotic trance. Even when they up the pace, the percussion is as complex and intermeshed as ever with shakers, metal cylinders and scrapers building a groove far deeper and more intense than any machine ever could. With the momentum rising full tilt, Galliano adds star sounds, echo and reverbable notes to jet another kosmos track. One of the dancers performs an X-rated limbo routine, perched on stage by an African woman in a beak dress from the audience.

The following song is killer *Pofo* dub constructed out of a cavernous, silky bassline skeletal balloon and woodpecker samples, thankfully, the dancers set this one out otherwise they'd have had to howl even the audience. Nearly as sexy, the encore starts off as an unvarnished traditional number from Neba Solo's home in the Sékango region of Mali, before transforming into the only real House number of the night. The results sounded not unlike the X-Files theme played by brothers from another planet, or, perhaps more accurately, brothers from the Fourth World.

PETER SHAPIRO

## Einstürzende Neubauten

Germany: Berlin Columbiahalle

A sharp reduction of air heaters out, as Bill Banged forces the nozzle of a gas jet to the microphone and the sound is immediately vanishing around the 3000-capacity Columbiahalle. This is Einstürzende Neubauten's homecoming gag, their 20th



plaster of dried lips and apocryphal war women later conclude, among the crowd with plates of chop. The place is decorated like a combination of a Moroccan souk and New York's Danconia circa 1983—cloths draped from the ceiling partially covering Bateau-styled, art rail paintings by Sid Al.

Part of a month-long festival of African Caribbean and Middle Eastern music taking place at the Glaciar, this evening of French House producer Frédéric Galliano with Neba Solo and his group was celebrating the release of the very fine

with a problem that it's so hypnotic you'd almost begin to see smoke through headlamps. Soon enough, though, Galliano drops a shuffling HipHop beat and a stuttering percussion pattern that sounds alternately like professional graffiti: And the Gaur with pianos, someone playing pat-a-cake with cowie shells and the Paris bottle symphony orchestra. After a serious jam with more pulsating basslines multilayered percussion and a traffic jam of samples, an intermission allows several people to roll some joints (thankfully not following the boomer Malen custom of using the paper from

with-day party and Neubauten's haven't looked or sounded so good in years. Also, Hache has now moved to bass, and he and relatively new percussionist *Pofo* are straddling the foundations of "Ende Neu" by backing out rhythms on petrol cans. NU Urnath concedes a little play into giving up its secrets, Jochem Arbeit grinds his guitar into action, and Australian keyboardist Ash Wednesday stands sentinel. Banged, who will later admit to an uncharacteristic attack of stagefright, seems moved by the reception and the emotion of the occasion.

### on location

the 1990s, and the 2000s, as well as one of the most important of the 21st Century. In Berlin, Germany, the Hochschule für Gestaltung (HfG) is currently determined to do this. They have consistently championed themselves as a free, independent, and open university, and the music, once again, is beats both local and fragile. It is also an open university, and in tonight's performance hour set with many songs, words, and images, and the Internet, there is a sample from a Neobourgeois improv tendencies. Tonight, it may excite to the full their uncertainty about the music from the most unlikely objects. It will give us a part of the metal sheets and the human images and the music, and the music will be anything but boring. And HfG is also a very busy body, and by picking the music on the fly, and rubbing his heavy metal with some a battery-powered musical device. Through such methods, the music is a part of the world.

### Rune Grammofon Showcase

Corner at the Whir's most challenging electronic DJ booth, currently exists inside the Red Café. In the hall and over two evenings in March, one of which took place at the Whir's weekly Auxiliary club night, the label offered a varied gamut of its acts in a 1-in setting. It's a forced the audience to hustle (and be between the club's concrete walls, but even those basic Ruse Kitzendelsen testing out the Landerford skills like an anxious parent at the school play. The atmosphere was as fast back as could be in the twice-week event, which until recently has been known as Club of Dub's premiere jazz venue, just picked up for international distribution through ECM. The label has successfully made diversity its branding card with releases ranging from

equipment spluttered to a start. Electronic problems persisted in the house sound system, which alternately boosted or cut the signal during the whole set. This, combined with the pressure of it being their first performance, made Alog a tense spectacle. What sounds did escape to the audience were origin and slating manipulations, much like their recent album *Don't Stop Swung*, as well as faint female phonics spiced over a thick texture of beats. Where Alog maintained fluid control over their interlocking melodies and beats, they acknowledged diversity of tones. The straight from the box' sound of many elements detracted from their otherwise innocuous set.

On the second evening, the crowd was more densely packed, but there was an intriguing surround-the-tone figure of Nils Olsson as he stood beneath his microphone, mysteriously trying to project the full scope of vocal and traditional Hardanger fiddle. Olsson's folk melodies and chant-like phrases tingled and vibrated, double-stop and, savoring the harmonies. The intersection between his classical and folk studies, both under Norwegian masters, worked best in these instances, when glowing flourishes gave way to long, unembellished passages. Organist Sigmund Asplund accompanied with interlocking chords that had the unfortunate tendency to mimic Olsson's few heavy-handedness when three of the violin's subtle colors were combined. Asplund's inspired on Olsson's new album *Skogen* where the violin's brother, Torgeren Olsson, adds a third dimension with either trumpet or guitar. The two performing without Torgeren did sometimes find an equilibrium that sparkled with musical understanding. These peaks made up for occasional moments of lethargy.

that did not stop for the entire set. Strakosken and Peigler Stein sat crosslegged on the floor weaving and bobbing over keyboards, effects boxes and samplers. Bernhard, their drummer, Jarle Vespøstvedt alternately tapped, pounded and scraped at his kit with an innate sense of texture, plunging onward over bombastic stummers of electronics. Henriksen, with hands flying first to him, then to effects racks like a man possessed as he moved the belt between two mics in a blind passion, often turned straight into the audience. Toning his guitar's sound into blasts of horn here or there, the trumpet's music would leak his horn's sound into the room's acoustics, of swirling electronics, and drum sets to take precedence. Fortunately, Supermarket took breaks in their sonic assault, which allowed the stone-faced audience to take another breather before lining up into their music's seductive but silent black hole.

## DAPHNE CARR

**Other Minds Festival VI**  
USA: San Francisco Theatre  
Artaud & Justice League

The Other Minds Festival has long since cemented its worth in San Francisco's cultural firmament, both as a forum for forward thinking composers and as an opportunity to hear performances of a uniformly challenging and rigorous nature. With Other Minds director Charles Amirkhanian on sabbatical in Italy, local electroacoustic composer and radio host Carl Stone was drafted in as guest artistic director for Other Minds VI. Stone's beyond-electric radio programming and his connection to the bleeding edge of music technology and post/modern compositional theory positioned



Also

[illegible]

LOUISE GRAY

neither of these artists was included in the line-up.

After having promised two sets of "live" dancing and the audience was left with its attention where the duo (the summer crowd favorites) on the small stage. Composers/producer John Hegie tapped out a melodic opening that stretched for several minutes into a sensual single of echo and repetition. Lasse Marhaug, who has worked on more than 200 projects with Herbie and Aztec, rolled out low-end rumbles as a base for bits of dissonance samples, and the ghost gracing of records between traces. The cluster build and fade method was subverted by quick drops in volume, including the final abrupt cut that ushered Marhaug and Hegie from the stage with minimal ceremony.

Tronzo duo Alog began their set with snippets of sound intended to combine into a symphonic spread, but some technical problem stilled all but the barest beat and trace of melody. Espen Sommer Eide and Dag-Are Haugen tapped wires, tugged on knobs, and shifted nervously until the

**Mamma said! knock you out: DJ Spooky and a jury of his peers.**



With the sleek, kinetic organ and mids-Superstars synth and guitar mixed into the spotlight. Only a few connections were double-checked: the phenomenally talented trumpeter Arve Hilleisen and electronics guru Ståle Storcksen, who have played together in various projects since meeting more than five years ago at the music conservatory in Trondheim, nodded for the lights to dim on the still chattering club. The stage, when it was buzzing with movement

Between Amirkhanian's recommendations and his own catholic purview of contemporary sounds, Siano convened an array of composers fascinating in its diversity alone: Nubian expatriate Hamza El Din, veteran performer and author Peter Garland, New

Christina Wolff with Miya Masaoka, Gordon Mumma, Bob Ostertag and William Winant



York-based Anne Golske, inspired by industrial sounds. AACM veteran Leroy Jenkins, born on a Can festival founder David Lang, Korean composer Hyo-shin Na, Dutch orchestral composer Jacob Ter Veldhuis, much venerated musician and academic Christian Wolff, and steering Other Minds into electro-modern terrain, Paul D Miller aka DJ Spooky. That Subliminal Kid, and from the UK, the ubiquitous Robin Rimbaud aka Scanner.

Peter Garland's festival opener, The Three Strange Angels, saw the composer addressing a piano keyboard with a wooden beam, sustain pedal engaged. His percussionist, William Winant, struck a bongo drum with authority sufficient to knock all of Haruki Ueno's oud strings out of tune backstage. The Nubian musician regained his monition in time to perform his "Escalator (Water Wheel)", a piece which, like Garland's, dated back nearly three decades. In contrast, David Lang's *Mimory* Pieces was written in the 90s, with each movement presenting unique challenges to its interpreter. These pieces were enhanced in performance by pianist Aki Takahashi's attention to detail and stylistic flexibility.

Leroy Jenkins, a solitary figure alternately clattering violin or viola, enjoyed an extended solo turn, alternating between gale-force drone and something like Anticollum melodies. Anne Golske's *Flying Spots* And Heavy Machinery, an Other Minds world premiere, joined the ethereal sustain of The

Onyx String Quartet against the literal heavy metal of percussion ensemble Redrum. The second evening at Theater Artaud commenced with Jacob Ter Veldhuis's *Strong Quartet No. 3*. Also performed by The Onyx Quartet, it depicted the composer's search for harmonic resolution, while seeming to throw the string players into a centrifuge, a dizzying amalgam of ground was covered in both its slow and fast movements. Then came what for these ears was the great revelation of the festival: two consecutive works by Hyo-shin Na, the first (*Rain Study*) being an elegant yet unerring meditation for piano, and the second — the world premiere of Blue

*Yellow River* — performed by ex-Kronos Quartet cellist Jean-Jacques, Richard Wom on double bass and Korean chamber player, Ji Young Yi.

Aki Takahashi returned to the stage for another memorial piano work, Peter Garland's *Bright Angel* — Henckes' first, after which Christian Wolff performed solo on Horner melodia. Wolff was then joined by an ensemble of considerable pedigree: Jeanne-Laure Winant, Miya Masaoka on koto, electronics by Bob Ostertag, Gordon Mumma on French horn and that barefoot wonder, Fred Frith, playing an amplified acoustic guitar with an E-bow. The group approached the switchbacks and potential coils of Wolff's episodic *Burlesks* with the confidence and daring of Grand Prix drivers. In particular, Frith and Winant exhibited the Northern Californian equivalent of Vulcan Mind Link, so closely were their movements synchronized.

The pair of art forums, staged on the afternoon of the festival's third day, held considerable promise. The first of these, under the banner *The 21st Century String* actually yielded more perspectives on the history of string instruments than their future. Bay Area koto virtuoso Miya Masaoka described the guitars of blind koto players in feudal Japan. Kenny Edlin recalled an instructive early encounter on a Cello street with an older outer player, who happened to be the orchestral director for Egyptian dance Gum Khatimani. Joan Jeanmaud touched on last glories of expanded cello performance, mentioning her efforts to commemorate the pioneering work of Charlotte Moorman. Unfortunately, the closest the panel got to fulfilling its stated mission was Jeanne-Laure's mention of the Locon signal processor which she had just acquired. Meanwhile, the second forum, Cultural Identity And Music in The Post-Millennium World, featuring Anne Golske, DJ Spooky, Scanner and turntable Edde Del — was well crafted, but lacked focus due to professional moderator Herman Gray's laissez faire approach to guiding the discussion.

Several hours later, Scanner and Spooky teamed onstage at local dance club Justice League for the festival's climax. Re-voicing the Other Minds audience onto the dancefloor was yet another inspired curatorial touch by Carl Stone, the performers responded with brutalizing volume, flinging shards of purulent sound at the assembled tuning, but their decision to eschew beats in favour of abstraction constituted an opportunity partially wasted, given the venue.

His decks sporting a massive DJ Spooky banner, lest we forget, Paul Miller coaxed notes from an upright bass, stroked a thumb piano to stimulate effects boxes and dropped Steve Reich quotes ("Come out to show them") amongst his turntable scratching. Scanner, leaning into the keyboard of his new black Powerbook, conjured a thicket of barbed tentacles which suggested rhythmic impulses while never actually giving over to them. The crowd thrived considerably over the course of the duo's lengthy set, the textures of a hard trance set were unmistakable, but as beats failed to materialise, the audience could only sway in place. Still, the rapport between Scanner and Spooky was palpable. Their mechanic interplay echoed into the cold San Francisco midnight outside Justice League, pointing the way for still bolder programming in future iterations of Other Minds.

RICHARD HENDERSON

## Seigen Ono Ensemble Japex Tokyo Blue Note

To describe Seigen Ono as a *daitenryo* is misleading, given that the word carries — for the British at least — somewhat demeaning connotations. But Ono is a difficult artist to pin down at the best of times. On the one hand he is a technical prodigy (engineer/mixer for everyone from Sakamoto to Sylvan, sound lecturer, MD of Tokyo's mastering studio of choice) a stone's throw from the plush Blue Note club, and boss of his own label, Sadiea

## on location

On the other hand he is drawn to jazz and Latin. In Brazil in particular, a country he has a deep affinity with. Indeed, when The Seigen Ono Ensemble made its debut at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1993, they had an onstage Brazilian cafe, with cocktails and dancing. Since then it has played only rarely in connection with Ono's other commitments. At the Blue Note his ensemble's basis is a strong brass section, bass and percussion, with Ono himself on guitar and changing. The next twist is the addition of sampler and turntables, a disgustingly dirty-sounding Fender Rhodes and walk-on Cameos from various friends.

Kicking off with a gorgeously understated guitar-led version of "Who Is She? He?" from the most recent of his limited edition 2000 series of 10" releases, Ono and Co shift up a gear with a strident, untidied piece which pits trumpet, trombone and saxes against Fender feedback and scratching. By the third song —



the surreal, spoken word (by actress Kyoko Enami) "Anchor/Past", if any surviving resemblance to trad or even modern jazz ensembles has been dashed by their conventionless collection of styles. Great to see it attempted. Thinking to see a work. On the colourful, uplifting "But It's True" Ono is joined by three Japanese musicians brandishing *pandero* and *cavaquinho* (rhythms of the castrati and tan-tan drum). The inappropriately titled "Poco" features Yoko Yuki belting out what could only be described as the blues.

Needless to say, given their shared enthusiasm for Brazil, Ono's music has similarities with occasional collaborator Arto Lindsay, but whereas Lindsay mixes Latin with NY noise, Ono's take is schizophrenic, perhaps echoing the immigrant uniqueness of the large Japanese community in São Paulo. Then, just when you think you've got him pinned down, he ends with "White Tango", from 9.7's *La Moxa*, which could have come from the soundtrack to the French art-house hit, *Joan De Florette*. Distant or world aesthete? When the music's so good, who cares?

DAVID ELLIOTT

**out  
there**

May's selected festivals, live events, clubs and broadcasts



## Sonic Boom

Coated by David Topp and co-sponsored by *The Wire*, this month's cover story is the largest exhibition of sound art ever assembled in the UK. Tony's Decompression Festival, an extraordinary, tentacular music feast from John Cage to Gus South, Oscar's *Madhouse*, Coil etc. frames a passage into the world of sound art. *The Wire* from David co-edited a cassette pop-up with Broner Eric explores the notion of the sound art. Angela Bulloch's pulsating sound sculptures lead to a new work, *Pop*. *Wire* features an interview with a bicycle-  
transformed of waves. Decompression summons a collection of new and old performances. *Wire* from David plays their local music. *The Wire*'s uncharted sculptures lead to a new work, *Pop*. *Wire* features an interview with a bicycle-  
transformed of waves. Decompression summons a collection of new and old performances. *Wire* from David plays their local music. *The Wire*'s uncharted sculptures lead to a new work, *Pop*. *Wire* features an interview with a bicycle-

Robert Tubb is a DJ, singer, and onstage MC who'd of interest to anyone who likes Phil Sze. He builds a stage around his 10-foot-tall record player, which he'll use to make a record that goes with what he's just said. He's got that great voice with a Kurt Schwabe-like, Christina Aguilera makes Phil For A Guy, and Chris MacIntyre's an energetic, bubbly person. Christina MacIntyre brings a guitar being dragged behind a pick-up truck. Russell Mills and Ian Watson design an installation out of six X-Rays and sheep fleece. Marko Mo doh constructs the pop kids. Par Sonic create an ode to the legendary Disc Spinner. Leo Bonafini is a guitar with a TV monitor showing a stretch of road. And Paul Schaepe makes a record; he's both house in Switzerland.

A related series of Friday Nights Live, the one Paul Burwell performed on the Brooklyn record player (28 April) is a club night from the East European Experience (see [www.brooklynmuseum.org/programs/european-experience](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/programs/european-experience)).

**Disastrous, Pile of the Wire Sound**  
System (12 May) Philip Jeck and his  
armageddon skyscraper (19) and a  
performance by Walter Marchetti (26) A  
series of Gallery Talks include David Toop  
explaining his grand scheme behind the  
exhibition (27 April) Paul Schütze (9 May)  
Matt Eastley (16) independent curator Kim  
Sweet (23) and Wire head honcho Tony  
Herrington (30) London Hayward Gallery  
27 April-18 June 10am-6pm £6.54 Q20  
7950 4242 Web: [www.hayward-  
gallery.org.uk](http://www.hayward-<br/>gallery.org.uk)

Sonic Bio-Live features the electronic tripartite commission of Scanner, Plan Scope and Project Dark (London Royal Festival Hall 4 May 7.45pm, £12.50/\$110, 020 7960 4242). Brian Eno gives a talk in the IFH's Chetwood Room (2 May 6.30pm, £12.5/10 including entrance to the exhibition). And a special club night from Sonic Poole. Experiments will be the vanguard of the century: the return of the one and only Sigge Sigge Sounk, along with DJ sets from Richard Fearless, J Sauti Kani, Barry Ashworth, Bailey and Dissomunou (London Scala 6 May 11.15pm, 020 7833 2021).

Trio (29) Eilan Ranker & Joel Ryan (30)  
Sirena Vasulka (30) Ale Tokasez & Rud Mahal  
(30) Schipperback & Casserley (30) AMM  
(4 May) ParkerGuy/Lytton (5) Irene  
Schweizer (5) Casserley & Lytton (5) Richard  
Barrett & Mary Olyer (6) Barry Guy Wech  
Gong Games (6) Keith Rowe and Kenny  
Wheeler Quartet (7) Glasgow CCA 28 April-  
7 May timeslots vary 0141 332 7521

## Homelands

The usual corporate-sponsored dance music orgy, featuring Littlefield Public Enemy Mob (Ian Brown Reprazent: BT Paul Oakenfold Scratch Perverts: Romanthony Grovender DJ Snek: Sasha: Carl Cox, Fabio Judge Jules etc. Winchester Monstrey Estate: 22-23 May 1pm-6pm \$45 ticketing 0870 500044

Lancaster New Music Festival

The tri-weekly weekend festival of new and improvised music will feature Phil Minton, the Brothers Grew, New Vacuum, Bidiyak, Your Dad, The Remote Viewers, Lusa and The Creative Jazz Orchestra. Lancaster various venues 18-21 May times/prices vary info 01524 388109

## Le Weekend

Lee Ronaldo, William Hacker, Simon H-Fall, Dekono, Bil Wells Trio, Life Without Buildings, Graham Halliwell, Geri-Jan Pinn, Robert Henderson, Hojiko, Toshimaru Nakamura, Hacker, Steve Jackson, the Steelplaid Sound System, WHF and Simon Vincent all trek north of the border for Spring's annual event for inventive new music and sound. Spring Cowane Theatre, 26-29 May, info 01786 443129.

## LMC Festival

The London Musicians' Collective's ninth annual festival of experimental music will be headlined by Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo. Other acts include William Hooker, David Truscott, Charles Hayward, Walter Hanchett, Anna Homer, Gert-Jan Piers, Toshimaru Nakamura and Hiroaki, with more acts to be confirmed. London South Bank Centre 27-29 May. £30-£25 season ticket. 020 7960 4342. Web: [www.lmc.co.uk](http://www.lmc.co.uk)

## The 1000 Year Journey

A fortnight celebrating the culture of the gypsy diaspora, perfectly timed to upset the Home Office. Acrobatics, brass and wild facial hair will be provided by Musafir: Istanbul Oriental Ensemble Taraf De Hadjouls, Tekamel, Goran Bregovic, Vera Bilo, Esma Redzovic, Jase



## UK Festivals

### Bath Fringe Festival

The six-day, just-fringe festival in Brazil, and regular Tin Town Quarter, Batana, Malinda, Bani-Bengal (11 Yr old), Raices Cubanas, Smith & Murphy, Dances of Edo, and Albert Nyatta & Friends. BWAfricafest runs May 26-May 31. [www.bwafricafest.com](http://www.bwafricafest.com), 01125 463362

## Bath International Music Festival

51. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2004, 19, 1207-1220.  
 52. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2004, 19, 1221-1230.  
 53. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2004, 19, 1231-1240.

McGregor, Sierra Maestra, Ian Botlamy's Right, John Surman, Abacus, Ed Jones, Black Hymns, Elena Andruar, Rafael Jimenez and Andrew Shearing along with dozens of musicians. All classical recitals. Bath concert series: 19 May-4 June times/prices vary. Call 125-463362.

## Communication: 10 Years Of City Slang

Taking place at the South Bank Centre, the tenth birthday party for the groundbreaking indie label has To Rococo Rot, Schneider TM, Experimental Pop Band (7 May), The Flamingo

**Ups: Built To Spill** Wheat (12); Lambchop  
Calico and Freshwater (13) donning their  
party hats and nose makers. London Royal  
Festival Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall. 7-13  
May; times/prices vary. 020 7960 4242  
Web: [www.sbc.org.uk](http://www.sbc.org.uk)

## free radicalCCAs

**Substiting Two Weekends Of Electronic**  
**Entertainment:** This series of concerts is co-curated by Evan Parker and features some of the biggest names in improv. Steve Lacy (28 Apr.), **Awash** (featuring Joel Ryan/Lawrence Casselino) (29 Apr.), **Schlippenbach Trio** (29 Apr.), **Thnick** (featuring Steve Beresford/John Edwards)

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*out there*



**Mystical All at Tonic**

Mierce, J. and LaRocca, P. (2000) *Barbican*, 30 April 1999, timesonline.com, 020 7638 8891.

## Polar Jazz 2000

A series of concerts focusing on collaborations between British and Finnish jazz artists including Kerry Wheeler performing with The Samuli Mäkelä Trio. London various venues. 24-28 May. times/prices vary. 020 7254 6516

### International Festivals

Angelica

[illegible]

## Batofar Cherche Londres

The Bonfire – an old bonfire erected in the ruins  
Swire has become one of the most special  
Halloween music scene. This month it looks  
like London with a series of programmes.  
Highlighting the best in British dance music and  
film. With a backdrop of visual art from the  
Halloween Film Society and Meisner's  
installations from Lucky Kitten and Eycote.  
Collective and other examples of the best of  
British modern cinema; the following labels will  
also be on for British cultural imperialism  
Hinterland Son and Scenario 17 Play!  
Cinema 18 (18) Live! 19 Sawing Collective  
20 Sulphur (21) Lo Recordings 23 Fat Cat  
24 Federation 25 Slap Up And Dance  
Botch & Scaper and Minus Parade 26  
Naga Tuna (27) and After Revolve 27  
The crowd were in a hurr about their own

by *The Wire* (28); *Johnny Cash* (29); *Phap Jack and The Wire* (30); *Willie*, a screening of the movie *Bottle Sinner* (31); *Pans* (32); *Baylar* (33); *How* (34); *16-28* (35); *DO* (36); *33* (37); *56* (38); *29* (39); *1000* (40).

### Beer And Sausage At The Polish National Home

The sloopy, sickly air of Greenpoint, Brooklyn gets invaded by the goth-metal hordes for the three-day fest of all things music. Performing between gap-in-time periods of kebabas, pierogies and Schaeffer beer are: People Like Us; Mr. Quintron & Miss Playstuck; The Mended Men; 10 May: Mast Ward & Veto Bennett; To Live And Shave In L.A.; Speedbreath; Jansky Noise; Flux Information Sciences; Electrophile; 11-13: Pan Sonic; Pia Chanson; Fennec; Ed Quon; Electro-Polys; and Harry Seven 11-21: USA; New York-Patrick National Home; 10-13 May: \$35 for three-day pass. 001 212 252 6800.

### Bell Atlantic Jazz Festival

highlighting over the European seaboard (all of US) this extraordinary built-in sell-off as the 'largest and most connected festival in the world'. It features performances from Jay-Z, Akshay Kumar, David S. Ware, Sanjiv Leherkar, Shantaram, Los Lobos and Rene Colvane (Washington), Dave Lerman, Mickey Han, Joy Colozza, Dave Gorman, Yellowman, Charlie Hume, David Sanchez and Me Shell (Newcastle) (Philadelphia), Merkin, Patti and Doug Gray (Daly), David S. Ware, Dave Douglas, Roy Hargrove, Sonny Fortune & Richard A. Willem-Hooker and David Sanchez (Boston) and Christine Calver and Charlie Hume, Billy Hargrove, Chamee, Robert O'Connell, Los Lobos, Ray Charles, Cecil Taylor & Green, The Monks, Dr. John, Les Van Van, Sonjaya, Jon Lucien and Robert O'Connell (New York), USA, Washington DC various venues, 4-7 July, Philadelphia various venues, 11-14 July, Philadelphia various venues, 17-21 July, New York various venues, 1-11 June, [www.usfestival.com](http://www.usfestival.com)

### Empty Bottle Festival

The legendary Empty Bottle club will play host to the cream of Chicago's avant garde at this annual Midwest shindig. Heaping up the creative ferment will be Fred Anderson, Peter Knapp, Howard Drake, Cori Fuhrer, First Long and Bono Smith (10 PM) Peter Knapp, Foros Florida, Gunther Sommerfeld, Lomborg-Holm, Ryan-Hembrey and Glen Kotchick (12 PM) Chicago Underground Quartet, Cori Fuhrer, Jim O'Rourke and Andre Jaume (1 PM) and Lorys and John Bucher (4 PM). There will also be a surprise set each night: USA Chicago Empty Bottle 10-14 May. Web: [www.emptybottle.com](http://www.emptybottle.com)

**Impakt**

The 17th edition of the audiovisual art festival will cover two basic themes. Glitch, arranged in collaboration with The Wire, covers the deliberate use of malfunctioning equipment in audio and visual art. Showing off the technical defects in their gear will be Konrad Aichele, Ralf Raster-Möller, Carsten Nissen, David Vastovsky, David Rygelski, David Polans, Moritz Schneider, Thomas Lefin, Bernd Friedmann, Tickle, ju-Zig, and video artists David Lärcher and Henning Wessler. The Premiere programme deals with the representation of the chest featuring works from various disciplines. The Netherlands (Utrecht) various venues, 10-15 May, 00 31 30 294 4493, e-mail: info@glitch.nl

## Musique Actuelle

The 17th annual NewMusic gathering in Quebec features Cecil Taylor, Fred Finis, Kai Vandenmark, Willem Breuker, David Thomas, Marilyn Crispell, Kimmo Pohjonen, Rene Uysaer, Jean Derome, Louis Sclavis and Mike Patton among many others. Canada: Victoriaville 001 819 752 7912, Web: [www.lmny.org](http://www.lmny.org)

### Tonic In May

A special series of concerts and events on the Lower East Side curated by guitarist Derek Bailey, Cecil Taylor, Susan Ibaña, Sigmund And



### Notes

Samir, James Blood, Ulmer, Rashid Ali,  
 Jazideh, Leandre, William Parker, John Zornis,  
 Cobra, Kue Mori, Jamaraldeen Tacuma, Colin  
 Weston, Jim O'Rourke, Mats Gustafsson, Fred  
 Frith, Chascan Marclay and Jim Staley USA  
 New York, Tonic 3-31 May 001 212 358  
 7501 Web: [www.tonic107.com](http://www.tonic107.com)

**Vooruit Geluid Festival**

Multi-genre, original and historical in the Low Countries, emphasising unusual collaborations between the likes of Luc Ferrari and DJ Olive, Bobo Quaterling and Otsimo Yoshimide, Eugene Chadbourne and folk band Oka Voegels, Hershey and DJ Olive, René Lussien and Martin Tiedraus, Catherine Janssens and Erik M., and Pierre Menegolaghius, Etwentice. There will also be performances from Dave Doolin, DJ Spooky, Haco Ned Rottberg, Hommes Ensemble, Gis & Pienies, Tobias Delon, The Speechheards, 4 Walls and Jan Bervo, Belgium, Voonut Art Centre. 4-13 May 02 32 9 267 2886  
Web: [www.annual.be](http://www.annual.be)

## Special Events

## Deeply Buried

Playing with the superlative's (mis)use in oral communication, the four artists at this short series of voice art focus on the vocal choroplex, sound-generators rather than as interpretive media. Traversing the chasm between body and language will be artist-choreographer/writer Aaron Williamson, performance artist Anna Ponton, disembodied narrator Mark Wayman, and voice performer Fátimene Audeoud. London South London Gallery, 30 May-2 June, 7-8pm, 020 7703 9199

## Integrated Circuits

A one-of-a-kind night of electroacoustic music and Super 8 films in Sussex. The Tacet Ensemble play works by Stockhausen. Electron Guns play original compositions, and local legend Ian Hellawell unveils his latest collection of reel-to-reel tape loops. Brighton Friends Centre, 13 Play 8 30pm. £35.00, 01273 731743.

## Onedotzero

lined as the world's largest dedicated digital  
line festival. The new media experience contains  
plenty of crossover with music, and the festival  
will feature live videos by Dylan Kinkle (Add  
N' Fix), Keworthy (Quarterm Groovander),  
Haw-Mai (Air Hammer & Tongs) (Fatboy  
Slim). Tickets will also be a showing of a short  
documentary on Jon Bon Jovi's pool cleaner  
London ICA 28 April-7 May timespices  
vary 020 7930 3647 Web  
www.wired2word.com

### Time Drops

A symphony and light installation exploring the intensity of stillness. The work is a collaboration between electronic music composer Akemi Ishiyama and lighting designer Jude James. London only, 25 April-8 May free, GJ0 7611 5000



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- Savvas Yastis

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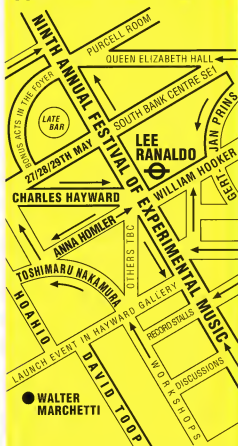
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## out there

### On Stage

**Abacus** John Law's classical+ jazz soundtrack with Jon Lloyd, Tim Wells and Gerry Hemmings. Bath Pavilion (28 May) London: Conway Hall (30), Birmingham: Midlands Arts Centre (31), Manchester: Band On The Wall (1 June), Nottingham: Gyngyngy Festival (2 June)

**Acid Andrusen/Vassili**  
**Fraser/Hopkins/John Marshall** CP1 springs courtesy of the touring piano trio. Leeds: Warehouse (24 May), Oxford: Jacqueline Du Rue Music Building (26), Brighton: Sals Benney Theatre (27), London: Pizza Express (29)

**Lovrie Anderson** The New York multimedia artist re-interprets Songs And Stories From May Day as polyethnic music theatre. London: Barbican, 24-28 May. 7.45pm. £30-£20. 020 7638 8891

**Jain Ballarm's Food + Farmer's Market** Trans-North Sea speed (Belmont) boogie collaboration. Brighton: Sals Benney Theatre (26 May), Bath Pavilion (27), Leeds: Phoenix (28), London: Jazz Cafe (29), Epsom: Warehouse (31), Birmingham: CBSO (2 June)

**Rhett Brewer** Part of a Mavericks Of New Music series, which will see the world premiere of this vocal/composer's in *Expectation Of The Thaw*. London: 291, 29 April. 8pm. £8/£5. 020 7613 5676

**Capitol K** Planet in extravaganzas with Lesaffre John and a DJ set from Mike Paradise in support. London: Arts Cafe. 28 April. 8pm-1am. £3.020 7247 5681

**Andrew Chalk + Colin Pettor + Contrastate** Post-industrial noise pop w/ow London Red Rose Club. 12 May. 8pm-2am. £5. 020 7263 7265

**Alec Dankworth/Dick Pearce/Sue Brown/John Donaldson** Live recording at a Cannonball Adderley tribute. CO Wakefield Jazz Club. 12 May. 01924 782339

**Lee Fields + The Soul Providers** Showcase from New York's funk revivalists. Losi. Osco Records. London: Jazz Cafe, 19-20 May. 020 7344 0044

**Daniel Flagg** Brief tour from indie/instrumentalist and composer. London: Upstairs at the Garage (14 May), London: Notting Hill Arts Club (16), Dublin: Antheus (16-18)

**Fushikushu** The only UK concert from the back-headed gang of the Japanese underground. London: Garage. 22 May. 7.30pm. £12. 020 7607 1818

**Gong** 32 years down the line. David Allen and his cosmic hippies are still going from zero to infinity. Dept Phoenix (27 April). London: Hammersmith Palais (7 May)

**Grand Union Orchestra** A performance of *Where The Rivers Meet*, a celebration of London as cultural melting pot. London: Sals Wells, 24-27 May. Times vary. £17.50-£5. 020 7863 8000

**Takashi Hirayasu + Bob Brozman** Sashin (Okawana) three-string fute and Hawaiian slack key guitar duo. London: Portland Room. 11 May. 7.30pm. 020 7660 4242

**Huan Huan Tu** The great Tuvan throat-

singing ensamble on a trip of UK tour. London: Blackheath Hall (29 May), Manchester: Bridgewater Hall (31)

**Kodo Drummers** Strenuous percussion workout from Japan's famous taiko drummers. London: Barbican, 27-31 May. 7.30pm. £27.50-£15. 020 7638 8891

**Laila** Margaret Fiedler and Guy Foster's somnolent space-jazz. London: ULL, 25 May. £8. 020 7344 4444

**Ute Lemper** German chanteuse messes with the cabaret canon. London: Royal Festival Hall (3 May), Manchester: Bridgewater Hall (5)

**Lorin Maazel** Live date from South African drummer. London: Vortex. 10 May. £6. 020 7254 6516

**Anne-Sophie Mutter** The German violinist celebrates 20th century violin music with performances of works by Webern, Bartok, Penderecki, Shostakovich, Berg and Stravinsky. London: Barbican. 28 April-7 May. 7.30pm. £35-£6.50. 020 7638 8891

**J-Zig + Luke Vibert + BJ Cole + Zan Lyons** Brief UK tour of post-ape shenanigans. Sheffield: University (16 May), London: Scala (17), Manchester: Planet K (18)



Birmingham: Hydrex Bar (19), Bristol: Fiddlers (20)

**Yassoon N'Dour** The giant of Senegalese music continues his UK tour. London: Hammersmith Apollo (29 April), Cambridge: Corn Exchange (30), Brighton: Event 2 (5 May), Birmingham: Aylor (17), Manchester: Bridgewater Hall (18)

**Jim O'Rourke + Loren Mazzacane Connors** Two American avant-garde guitar masters on a short UKish tour. Cork: Trunk Arts Centre (2 May), Dublin: Whelan's (3), Belfast: Censor Hall (4), Glasgow: 3 (6), Manchester: Contact (7), London: Garage (10)

**Pandemonium Band** Steve Noble, John Edwards and Pat Thomas celebrate Sun Ra recording 30th Anniversary. 27 May. 7.30pm. £15-£4

**Ahida Parveen** Sufi vocalist sings the mystical poetry of Shah Latif. Sharbat Qalandar. Shahn Shahn and Shibeb Shah. London: Royal Festival Hall, 30 May. 7.30pm



£30-£10. 020 7960 4242

**Praying For The Rain** The eco-rocks group that wowed em in *Allegers*. London: Conway Hall. 5 May. 7.30pm. £8/£6. 020 7274 5519

**Adam Qasimov** Ecstatic singing from the master of Azerbaijan. London: Cambridge: Corn Exchange (25 May), Coventry: Warwick Arts Centre (27), Brighton: Gardner Centre (28)

**Joshua Redman** American saxophonist performs with Andy Sheppard. The Bushyoke. Anel (19 May), London: Barbican (20), Birmingham: Ronnie Scott's (21), Cambridge: Corn Exchange (22), Leicester: De Montfort Hall (23)

**Leo Reed** New York legend tours on the back of his new album. Edinburgh: Playhouse (17 May), London: Apollo Hall (18-19)

**Rothko + Cwll Lo + Sneakerbo** Belfast: Union label showcase. London: Putney Room. 9 May. 7.30pm. £8. 020 7960 4242

**To Rococo** Real postmodernism from the Berlin trio. Cork: Trunk Arts Centre (9 May), Belfast: Whelan's (11), Dublin: Trinity Ball (12), Dublin: Whelan's (13)

**Wise** Three nights on which to examine the state of the art-rock quartet's reunion. London: Garage. 26-28 May. 10.020 7607 1818

**Yo La Tengo** Yo La Tengo, Georgia Hubley and James McNew turn themselves inside out. Cambridge: Junction (3 May), Sheffield: Leadmill (4), Brighton: Gardner Arts Centre (6), Warwick Arts Centre (7), London: Royal Festival Hall (8), Glasgow: Royal Northern College of Music (9), Glasgow: Mitchell Theatre (11)

**Yossarian** Easy Listening/psychodelic pastorals. London: Upstairs at the Garage. 11 May. 020 7607 1818

**Yozog Coda** Dystopian electro-Metal from Africa odies. London: Asoma. 11. 30 May. £10. 020 7434 0403

### Club Spaces

**Abayathesis** New club run by AJ Seeling I and Add N To X featuring resident DJs Barry 7, JP Buckle, Ben Rymor and Noel Kibizi. Sheffield National Centre Of Popular Music. fortnightly Thursdays, 8-11.30pm. free

**All Angels** An evening of new and reworked music in leafy Chesham, with John Butcher & Rhodan Davies. Martin Hayes and Chris Burt, Mark Wastell and Tony Wren. London: St Michael And All Angels Church. 24 May. 7.45-10pm. £5/£4. 020 8994 7993

**Blanket** Contemporary electronic music played at comfortable listening levels with nice toasted sandwiches. With Brick and guests. London: Owners at the Social, fortnightly Saturdays starting 6 May, 2pm-6pm. free. 020 8964 0079

**Bring Your Sausages** VFM's fifth annual celebration of the British burger. with Kid-606, Goodspeed and Sweets & Underwood. Manchester: Venue 101, 4 May. 8pm. free if you bring sausages. 0161 480 5845

**Culturalite** Punk, Ambient, Hardbop and Linn jazz from Max Reinhardt. Ray Ray Jackson and Marcus Garvey. London: Gardening Club, Sundays, aftermidnight. £5/£3. 020 7497 3154

**Devilish** Hip-hop, funk and breakbeat from Rae & Chohan. Onstage: Knight, Plonkey Mike and Joe 90. Leicester: Prince Charles. 5 May. 9pm-2am. £5/£4. 01252 726234

**Diffusion** Free thinking electronics from Onformation and VJ Rob First. London: Below 54, 30 May. 7pm-midnight. free. 020 7928 7337

**Download** New jazz club with Tim Whitehead (12 May), Roger Bakajakis (19) and Browns Bag with Rico (26). Farnham: Explains, Fridays, £8/£4. 01252 726234

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Tay 15 Jacques Le Conte Jin Carter  
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Hackerz Jin Carter and Tayo 25 London  
Heaven Thursdays 10pm-2:30am \$5 0900  
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**Inside Looking Out** Baritone Baroque  
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of the American post-rockers wander around  
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## Radio

### National

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**John Peel** Tuesdays-Thursdays 10pm-midnight The new  
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**Giles Peterson** Wednesdays midnight-2am Up- and down tempo beats experimental  
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scene's longest serving DJs

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HipHop hits

#### BBC Radio 3 90-93 PM

**Late Junction** Mondays-Thursdays 10.15-11.30pm Vinty Sharp and Franca Tullington present  
news and discussion of a diverse musical selection

**Jazz Legends** Fridays 4-5pm Archive recordings and interviews, presented by Julian  
Joseph The month Oscar Peterson 15 May Billie Holiday 11.21 Sonny Rollins 11.91 Stan  
Tracy 12.6

**Jazz Line-Up** Saturdays 4-5pm Jazz magazine featuring interviews and CD reviews  
presented by Suey Park and Claire Haron

**Jazz File** Saturdays 6-6.30pm Ray Frensham presents The Cool Mr Kershaw a four-part series  
examining the music and teachings of the legendary cool saxophone legend

**Finix H** Saturdays 10.45-11.30pm Eclectic mix of new music and discourse from Robert  
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**Jazz On 3** Saturdays 11.30pm-1am Modern jazz recorded in session and concert. This  
month Paul Rogers 15 May Dresch Quartet 11.31 Mike Westbrook & The Orchestra Of  
Smiths Academy Ed Jones/Mike Hyland Double Quartet 12.1

## Regional

#### BBC Greater London Radio (GLR) 9.9 PM

**Destination** in Wednesdays 8-9pm Russ Allen spins a midday morphing selection of  
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**Charlie Gillett** Saturdays 7-8pm Rock roots dub World Music blues R&B and more  
sounds of the city

#### BBC Lancashire 95.5/103.9/104.5 FM 935 NW

**On The Wire** Saturdays 12-1pm Steve Barnes's free-style mix of dub experimental  
electronic rock free jazz World Music and beyond

#### BBC Merseyside 95.8 FM 1465 NW

**PMs** Saturdays midnight-2am Featuring the Late World Noise Roger Hall's mix of avant rock  
postmodern warped Ambient and global genres in filmed sequences

#### BBC Scotland 92.4-94.7 FM

**From Bebo To HipHop** Wednesdays 8-9pm David Sellers drops jazz and new beats  
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#### Cable Radio 26.8 FM (Millon Keynes)

**The Garden Of Earthly Delights** Fridays 10pm-midnight Shane Queen's blend of avant  
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#### Kiss 102 FM (London)

**Patrick Forge** Saturdays 10pm-midnight Eclectic jazz-not-jazz mix

**Frost and Hyde** Saturdays midnight-2am Home breakfast that's chills the most  
**Splinnat & Friends** Saturdays 2-4am DJ Jungle cyber-soul breakfasts and electrified  
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**Coincide** Wednesdays 2-4am Minimal Techno and concrete House

#### Sun 104 FM (Brighton)

**Insult Wred** Fridays 10pm-11pm Eclectic selection of leftfield independent dance tunes  
fused with 60s-70s feedbacks

**The Chai Factor** Saturdays 5-6pm Dave Crook's continuous mix of drum in bass dub  
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# epiphanies

Laurie Anderson tells Rob Young how a great white whale lured her towards her latest revelations

One of my first epiphanies involves the Tchaikovsky violin concertos, and how an instrument can really go wild in the cadenza. It was the first time I was aware that improvising was something, it didn't seem like those notes were written on the page. I heard them at music camp when I was 12, 13. I guess it was because of cadenzas that I decided that I didn't want to do any classical music any more. It was too much of a trap.

I have had a realisation about the jumpcut. When you're playing in a show, people don't know how weird it's going to be, so you have to establish the width of the jumpcut very early. In other words, you let them know right away. "This is not going to be one of those logical evenings," then they don't get pulled along the garden path of logic. You let them know right away, "You're going to have to jump from here to there, and let's go, and if you don't wanna go, then knock yourself out." I realised that people needed to know what it was going to be, and then they would play — or not. But at least it didn't creep up on them. Ever since I realised that, I've been putting in something that does that in the first five minutes, and it mustn't be later than that. It's like the way you make an opinion of somebody when you first meet them, and it's hard to get over that.

Creating *Songs And Stones From Moby Dick* is by far the most important thing I've ever tried to do. It took a big bite out of me! Because it was so intimidating. And also because I was afraid Herman Melville was about to come and get me. "What right do you have to do a multimedia show with my book?" I was genuinely scared of that, because he doesn't seem too dead. We live in his neighbourhood. I had an epiphany when reading his Bible. Somebody loaned it to me — his own copy of the Bible that he had gotten two weeks before he started writing *Moby Dick*. And it was full of these notes in pencil. His wife had erased most of them. My friend took it to the FBI and said, "Can you tell me what's been written here?" They said, "Maybe if it was 30 years ago but not after 150." So I was going through the Bible with my magnifying glass, looking for any mention of whales, leviathans, whatever. And there it is, suddenly, in Isaiah chapter 27: "And the Lord shall smile. Leviathan, that piercing serpent that lives in the sea." I'm like, "Wait a second! I realised that the whale was the snake, and the ocean was his garden."

The whale is not evil. It's not like a monster movie, where the monster eats a few people

and people say, "Oh, he's not too bad, the monster's kind of sweet," and then he comes back and kills them all. In the end they kill the monster in most of those movies. But in *Moby Dick* the monster gets away, and he kills them all. It's really pretty dark. I thought, Wow, is that really what he meant? The monster gets away and the ship goes down, and that's it. And there's one guy who survives to write down the story, like the guy traveling with the rock 'n' roll band, the nerd sitting in the back of the bus taking notes on the tour, and then he writes this tour expose. In the end, what Melville did was write a novel that's full of such beauty: the night sky, polar bears, incredible images. So what his book is about is beauty — staggering beauty. The storyline is great, but it's not everything. All those cardboard characters cutting up blubber, boiling it up, having their

lights. Did you know his first draft didn't have Ahab in it? Imagine him giving it to his editor, and his editor reads it. "Hm, those guys go fishing, look around, come back, that's it. Where's the engine here, Herman? What's moving this thing?"

Some of the characters are looking for revenge, and some of them are looking for meaning, rather than not-meaning, where they're just floating around in a big bathtub and thinking, "Isn't it nice to be alive?" I think that search is particularly American — we're very naive, we want to know why we're here.

I realised I was going to have to get rid of all these characters, because they were in the way, and I wasn't going to go through the book and act it out — that would be crazy. The film version with Patrick Stewart did that, and it was quite hilarious. They took the Lear point of view, so there's Patrick Stewart doing all the famous

Melville monologues — "Strike through the mast!" — in the elegant Shakespearean accent, and the camera pans round to these guys on the ship, and they're going, "Huh?" How'd this British guy get on the ship what's with the accent? It was creepy. I have to find out what the story's going to be, what they are looking for. Forget the psychological dark side of the captain — people only have a certain amount of time and mental space for this. The book is also very much about guys working, which was a very 19th-century preoccupation, defining what that meant. I think the two key books of that period were *The Communist Manifesto* and Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener* — you can read it in about ten minutes, and it's the polar opposite. I just got *The Communist Manifesto* 150th anniversary edition. What a book! "A spectre is haunting Europe." "What a great story, ending with 'Workers of the world, unite!'"

There is nothing in our century that's like that, nothing that has that grandeur. The other book is this little short story about Bartleby, the scrivener, which was a 19th-century need. He copies legal documents by hand, he would never leave the office and was always there working. One day the boss comes in and goes, "Hey, Bartleby, I want you to do this thing." And Bartleby says, "I would prefer not to." And with those words rang in a whole new era of what work is...

Songs from the big chair: Laurie Anderson





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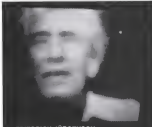


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Mute presents Pan American, Echoboy, Pan Sonic + FM Einheit, Studio K7 presents Torkwase, Funkkollektiv  
Stereomoon 20.20 Vision presents Ralph Lawson, Random Factor, Domènec Capello, Disk B. presents Patrick  
Fubinger, Abe Deque, Dekar & Grieser, Montreal Electronic Grooves presents Les Jardinières, Moulin, Subterfuge  
+ Salazar, Chacos presents Beat Rice, Jean Plug Research presents Born Under a Rhythmic Planet, Low Res,  
Munnequin Lung, Enagi presents Razzacielos, Diego Ro K, Ladomat presents Turner, Stephan, Adu presents  
Opopop, Anna Rumbos & more

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